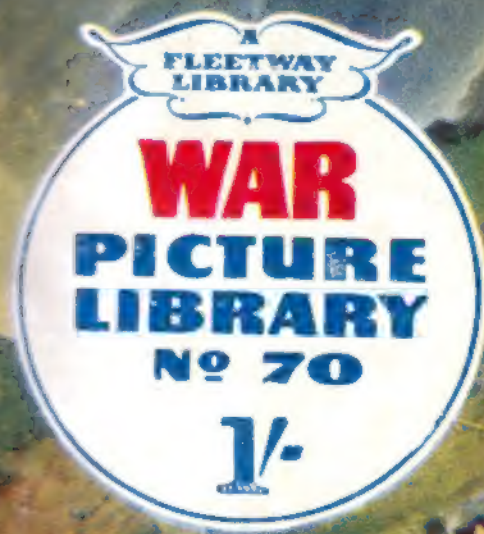
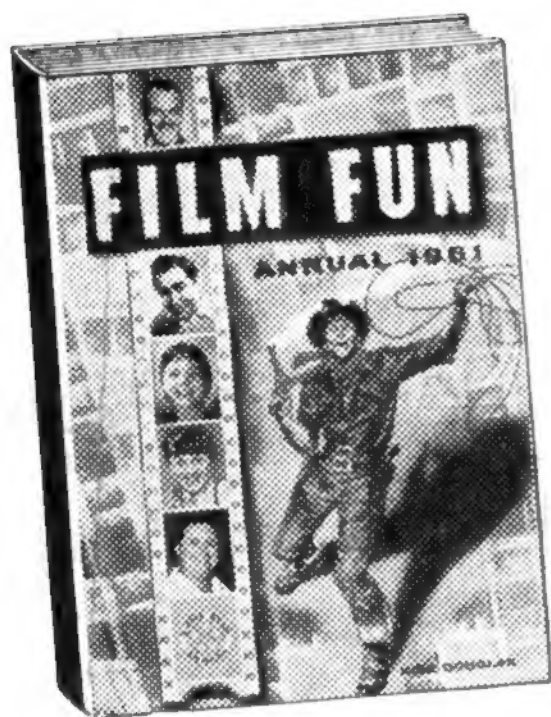


The WHISPERING DEATH

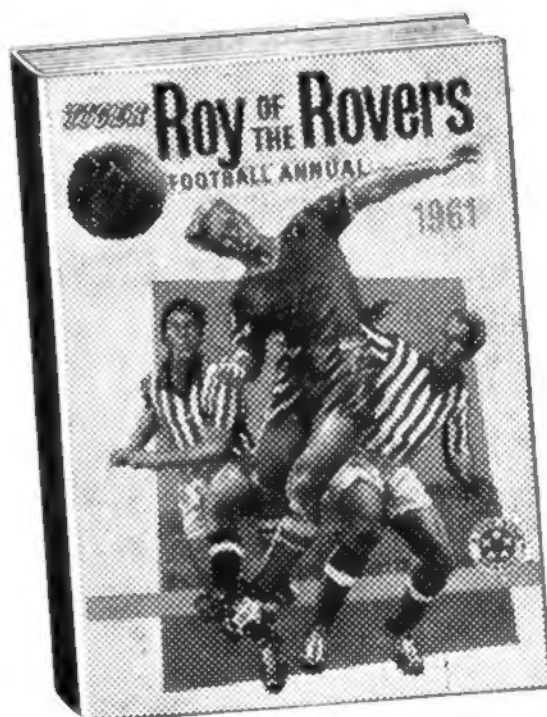


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The **Whispering** **DEATH**



IN THE YEAR 1943, THE "BATTLE OF THE RUHR" THUNDERED TO ITS FINAL STAGES. AS Bomber Command FOUNDED THE GREAT RUHR CITIES, THE ENEMY FOUGHT BACK SAVAGELY WITH FLAK AND NIGHT FIGHTERS - TWO DEADLY WEAPONS AGAINST WHICH NEW TECHNIQUES WERE CONSTANTLY ATTEMPTED. BUT WITH EVERY SUCCEEDING RAID, THE HAZARDS BECAME GREATER . . .

Chapter 1. GAUNTLET of FLAK

PILOT OFFICER BOB DANVERS AND HIS NAVIGATOR, PILOT OFFICER ANGUS ROBERTSON, WERE ON THEIR WAY FROM AN OPERATIONAL TRAINING UNIT TO THEIR NEW SQUADRON...

HOW ABOUT DROPPING IN ON MY BROTHER GUY - HE'S STATIONED NEAR HERE! WE'RE NOT DUE TO REPORT TO THE SQUADRON TILL TOMORROW MORNING!

FAIR ENOUGH, BOB!



THEY TURNED INTO THE MAIN GATE OF THE BOMBER STATION . . .

... YOUR BROTHER, SIR? YOU'LL FIND HIM IN THE CREW LOCKER ROOM, I EXPECT. THEY'LL BE TAKING-OFF SOON!

TAKING-OFF?



The Whispering Death

3

IT WAS NO TIME TO PAY A SOCIAL CALL BUT NEVERTHELESS, IT CHEERED GUY DANVERS TO SEE HIS YOUNGER BROTHER. THEY WALKED OUT TO THE WAITING HALIFAX . . .

I SAY, GUY, COULD I WANGLE A TRIP WITH YOU ?

YOU MUST BE MAD, BOB ! IT'S NOT A CROSS-COUNTRY TRIP WE'RE GOING ON . . .



BOB DANVERS COULD ALWAYS GET ROUND HIS BROTHER BUT THE PILOT OF THE HALIFAX WAS NOT SO EASY . . . YET HE GAVE IN BEFORE THE NEW YOUNG PILOT'S OBVIOUS ENTHUSIASM .

IT SEEMS TO ME YOUR BROTHER'S FLAK-HAPPY, DANVERS ! OKAY ! HE CAN COME, BUT KEEP HIM OUT OF THE WAY ! YOU'LL HAVE TO HURRY IF YOU'RE GOING TO KIT HIM UP .

THANKS, SKIPPER !



The Whispering Death

ANGUS ROBERTSON WATCHED THE BOMBER FORCE PREPARE TO LEAVE WITH MISGIVINGS FOR HIS FRIEND . . .

I CAN'T HELP FEELING BOB'S STICKING HIS NECK OUT BEFORE HE NEEDS TO!

PILOT TO CREW! TEST YOUR EQUIPMENT. DANVERS, TELL YOUR BROTHER - NO UNNECESSARY TALK ON INTERCOMM! FROM NOW ON IT'S STRICTLY BUSINESS!

OKAY, SKIPPER - I'VE TOLD HIM!

AS THE BOMBERS SET COURSE FOR THEIR RENDEZVOUS POINT, BOB STOOD BEHIND THE PILOT AND THE FLIGHT ENGINEER . . .

POOR OLD GUY, I BET HE'S COLD AND LONELY IN THAT REAR TURRET! THE PILOT'S SEAT'S THE PLACE TO BE!

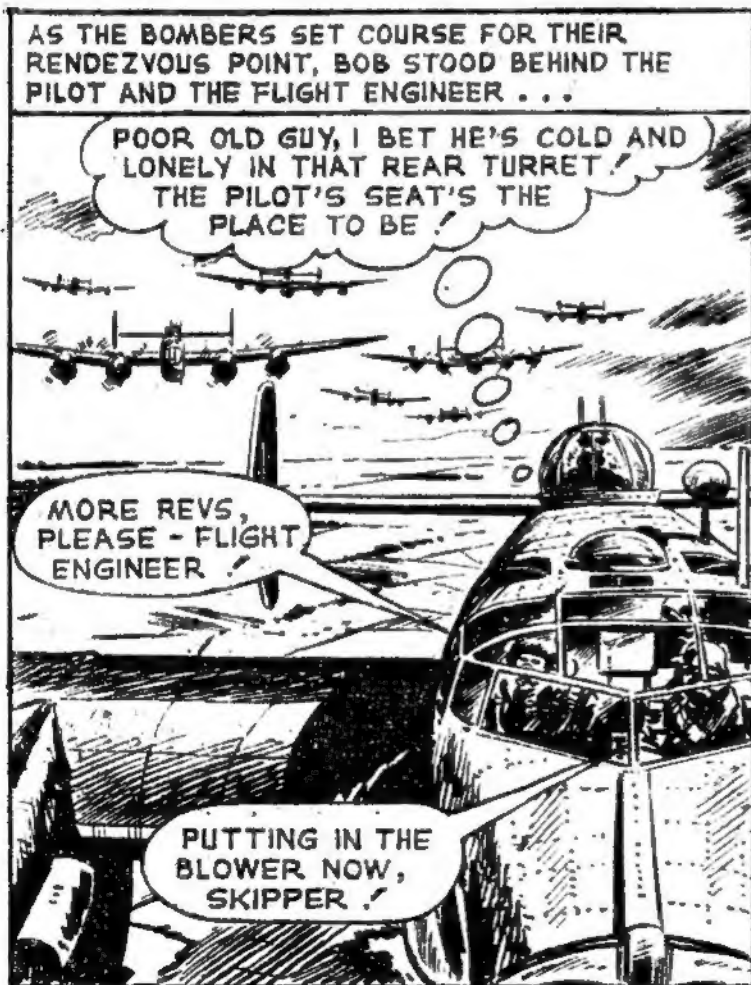
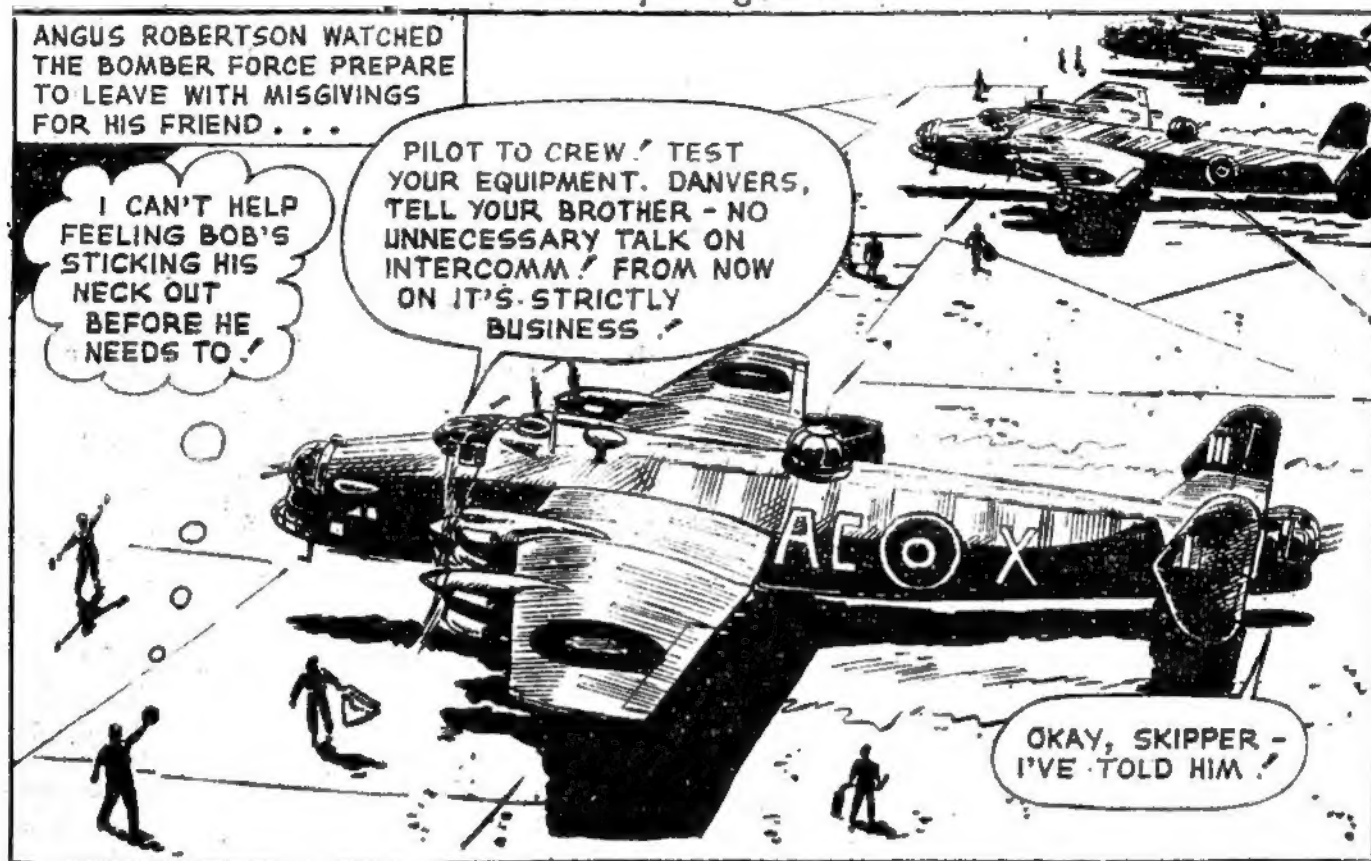
MORE REVS, PLEASE - FLIGHT ENGINEER

PUTTING IN THE BLOWER NOW, SKIPPER!

BOB FELT THE TREMENDOUS SURGE OF POWER AS THE SUPERCHARGERS BOOSTED THE WHINING MERLIN ENGINES . . .

WE'RE CROSSING THE ENGLISH COAST! CHECK YOUR EQUIPMENT AGAIN! GUNNERS, TEST GUNS!

OKAY, SKIPPER!



LONG BEFORE THEY CROSSED THE ENEMY COAST, GERMAN RADAR HAD PICKED UP THE APPROACHING FORCE. THE GROUND DEFENCES WERE ALERTED . . .

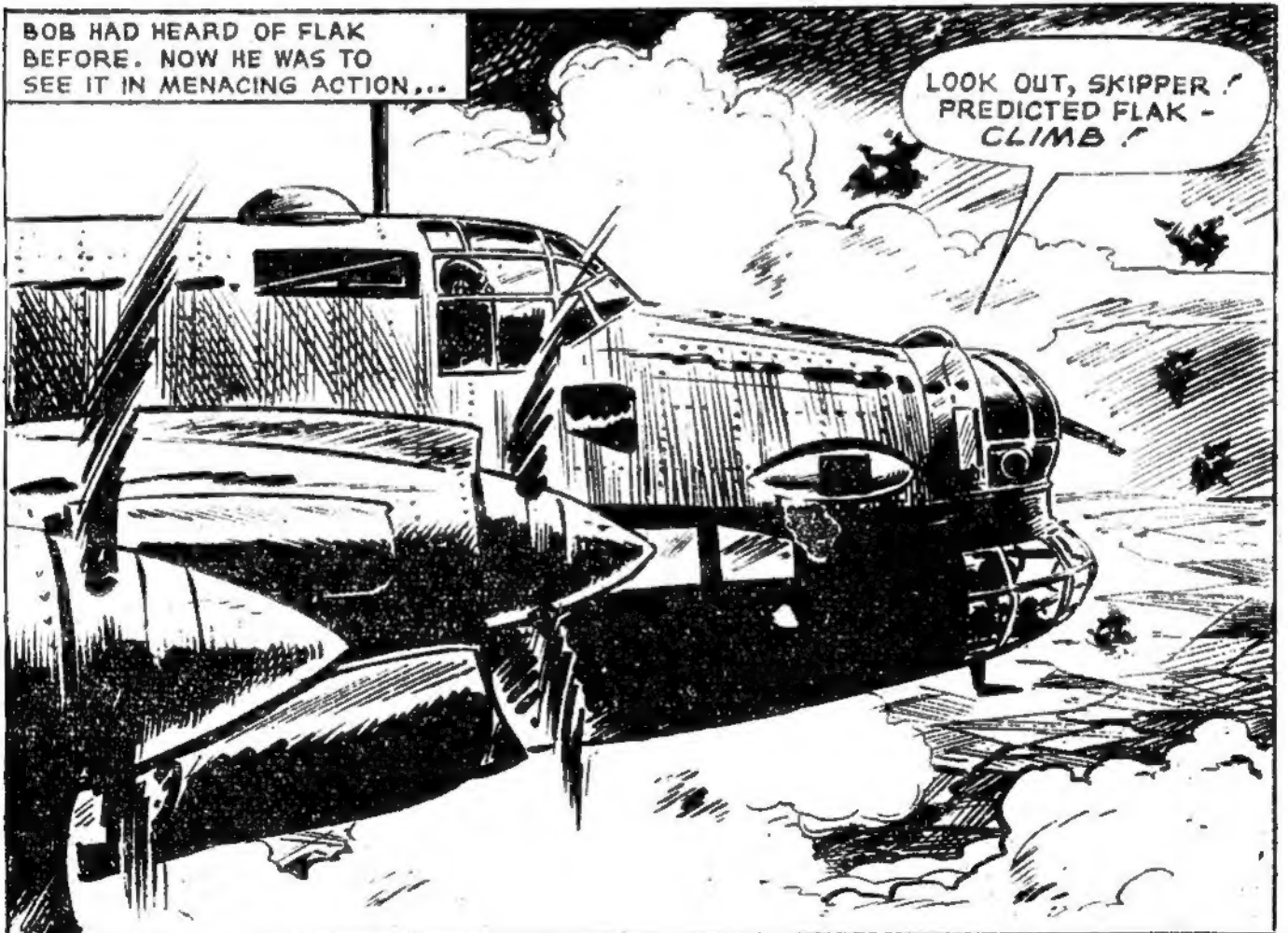
CONTROL REPORTS TERROR FLYERS AT EIGHT THOUSAND KILOMETRES !

RANGE FINDERS, PREPARE !



BOB HAD HEARD OF FLAK BEFORE. NOW HE WAS TO SEE IT IN MENACING ACTION...

LOOK OUT, SKIPPER ! PREDICTED FLAK - CLIMB !



THE HALIFAX CLAWED UPWARDS -
BUT IT WAS TOO LATE!



THE BLIGHTERS
HAVE HIT US!

THE GIANT BOMBER LURCHED CRAZILY
AND AS THE PILOT FOUGHT TO REGAIN
CONTROL, BOB STRUGGLED DOWN THE
FUSELAGE TO FIND OUT THE DAMAGE....

IT'S GUY!



HELP! I'VE
COPPED IT!
HELP!

ALL BOB DANVERS' HEADY EXCITEMENT WAS SUDDENLY WASHED AWAY. FEARING WHAT HE MIGHT FIND, HE DROPPED TO HIS KNEES BESIDE HIS PAIN-WRACKED BROTHER...

...I'VE HAD IT, BOB! GET INTO THAT TURRET - TAKE - TAKE OVER, LAD!

GUY! NO - GUY - NOT THIS...

BUT GUY'S HEAD LOLLED BACK...HE WAS DEAD! FOR LONG SECONDS, BOB KNELT THERE AS IF STUNNED - THEN HE CLIMBED DAZEDLY BEHIND THE GUNS OF THE TURRET...

REAR GUNNER TO PILOT... MY BROTHER'S DEAD - I - I'VE TAKEN OVER!

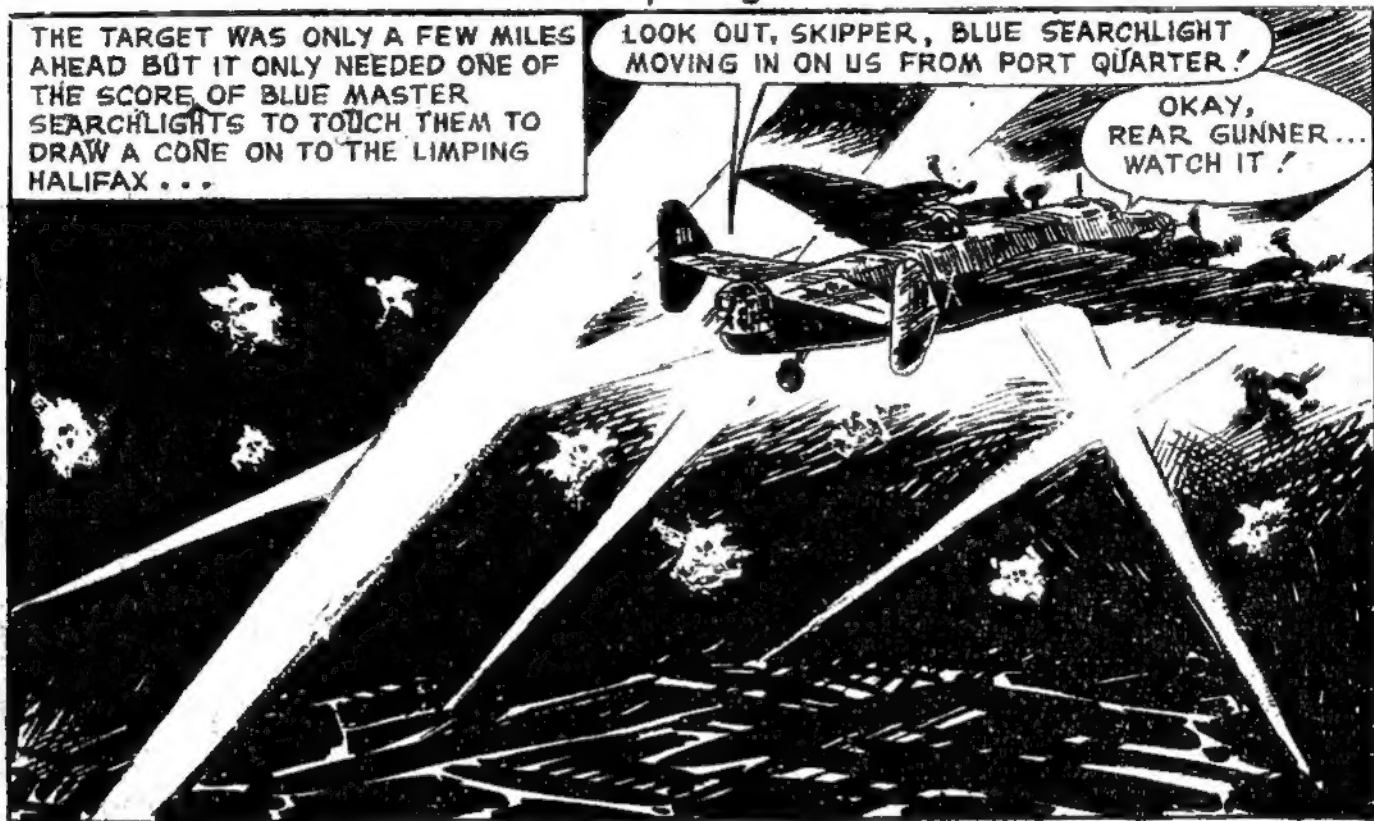
WHAT! GOOD LAD! LEAVE THE FIRE CONTROL TO THE MID-UPPER... HE KNOWS THE DRILL!

The Whispering Death

THE TARGET WAS ONLY A FEW MILES AHEAD BUT IT ONLY NEEDED ONE OF THE SCORE OF BLUE MASTER SEARCHLIGHTS TO TOUCH THEM TO DRAW A CONE ON TO THE LIMPING HALIFAX . . .

LOOK OUT, SKIPPER, BLUE SEARCHLIGHT MOVING IN ON US FROM PORT QUARTER!

OKAY, REAR GUNNER... WATCH IT!



BUT THE TECHNIQUE OF STAYING ALIVE UNDER ENEMY SKIES WAS NEW TO BOB. HE MADE AN ELEMENTARY MISTAKE . . .

BOB DID NOT KNOW THAT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO ESCAPE AN APPROACHING SEARCHLIGHT AND THAT IS TO DIVE *INTO* AND *THROUGH* IT . . .

YOU BLISTERING IDIOT! PORT NOT STARBOARD! THIS'LL BE OUR LOT!

SEARCHLIGHT'S CLOSING IN! PREPARE TO DIVE TO STARBOARD . . . DIVE!



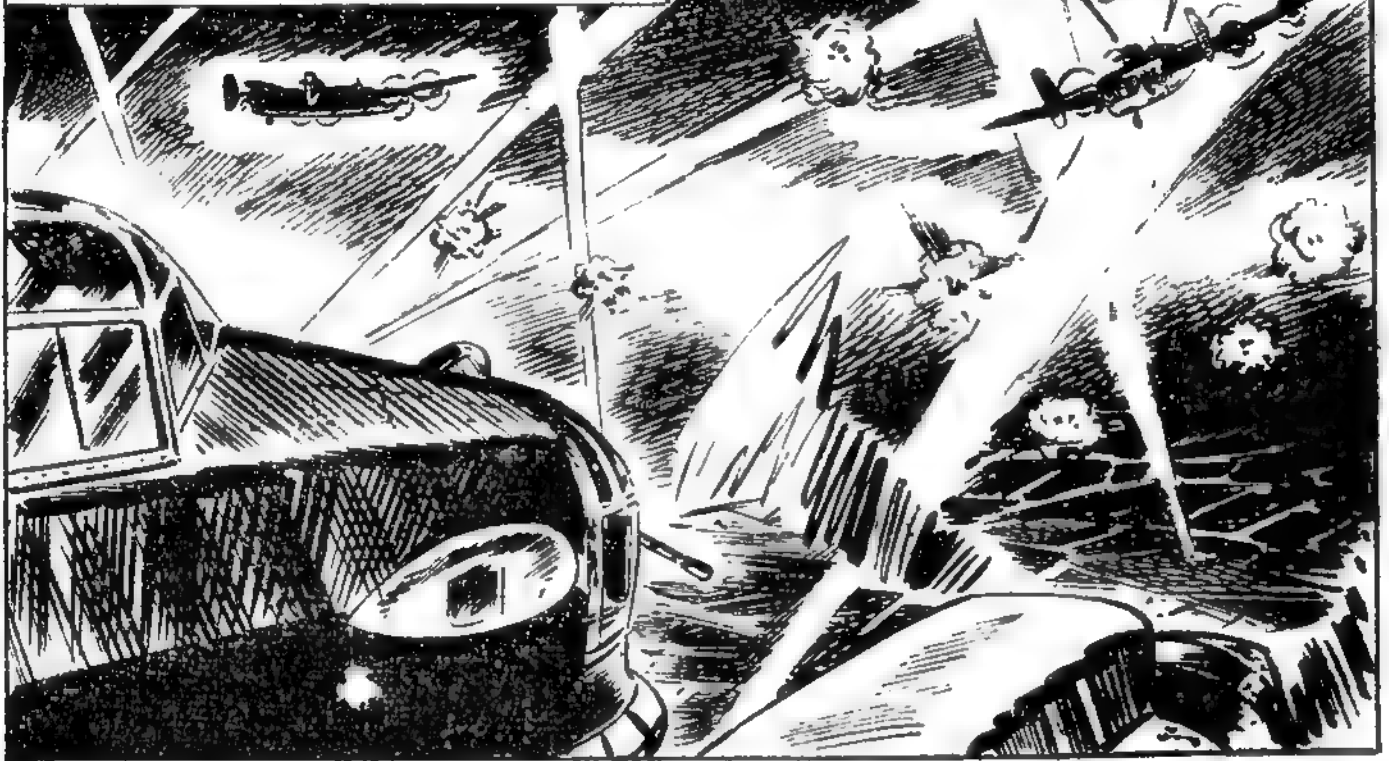
The Whispering Death.

9

THE MID-UPPER WAS VERY NEARLY RIGHT... THEY WERE WELL AND TRULY CONED. THE USUAL BARRAGE HAD STARTED A HUNDRED FEET BENEATH THEM AND WOULD WORK ITS WAY UP! THEY HAD THIRTY SECONDS TO GET OUT!

ENGINEER, STAND BY TO CUT THE PORT ENGINE!

STANDING BY!



BY CUTTING THE PORT OUTER ENGINE, THE PILOT HOPED TO BE ABLE TO BRING THE HALIFAX ROUND IN A TIGHT DIVING TURN. BUT AT THAT MOMENT...

HECK! THEY'VE HIT THE PORT OUTER! PUT ON THE EXTINGUISHER SWITCH!



EXTINGUISHER SWITCH ON!

THE SUDDEN LOSS OF THE PORT OUTER BROUGHT THE STARBOARD WING SLICING ROUND. OUT OF CONTROL WITH TWELVE TONS OF BOMBS NESTLED HEAVILY IN HER BOMB BAY, THE HALIFAX SWUNG INTO A VIOLENT SPIN...

I CAN'T PULL HER OUT! BOMB AIMER! JETTISON YOUR BOMBS!

WITH PLEASURE, SKIPPER...THIS DIVE'S BROUGHT US OVER THE TARGET, ANYWAY!

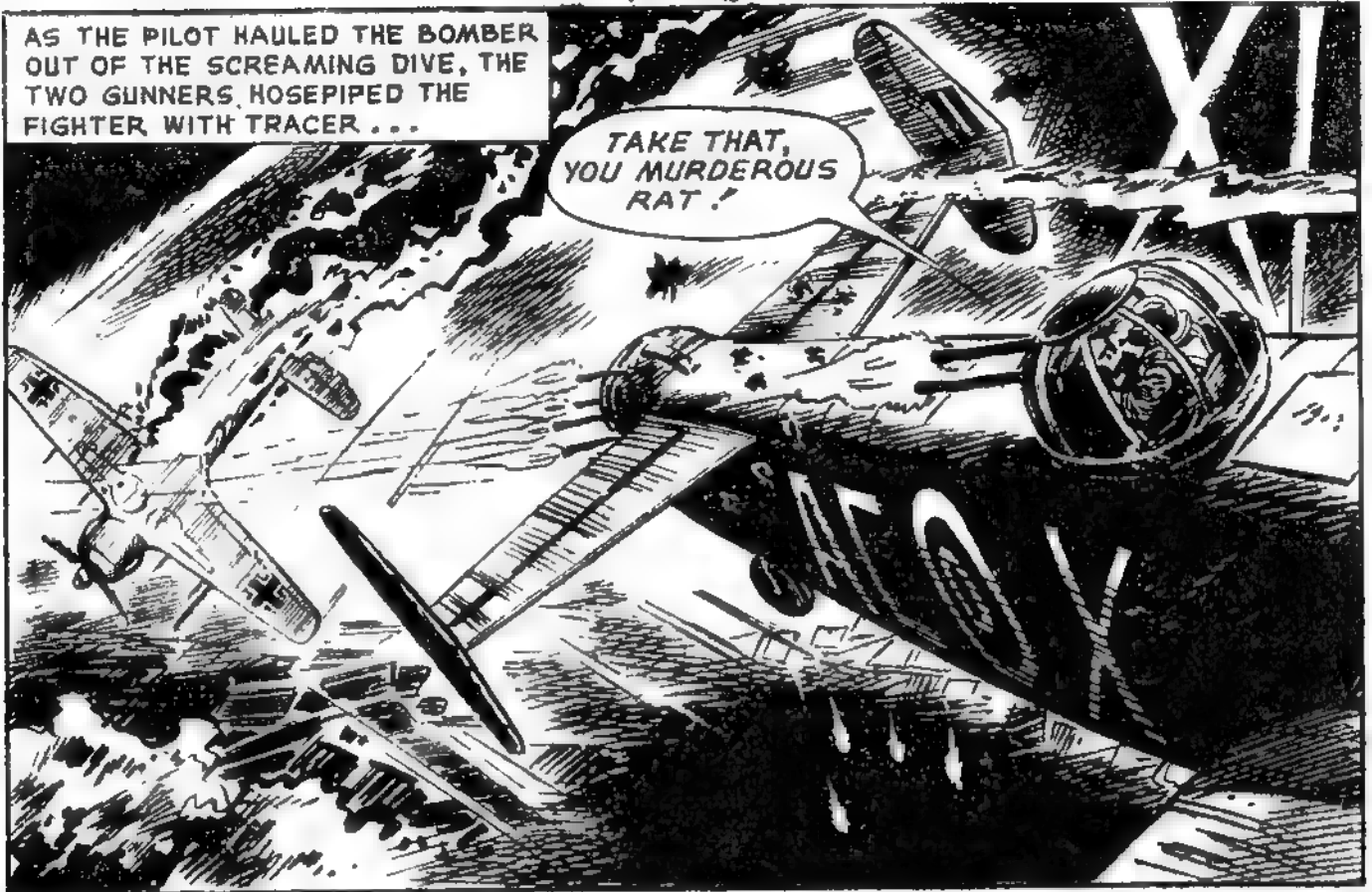
THE GREAT WEIGHT OF BOMBS SLID OUT OF THE GAPING BOMB DOORS.

BOMBS GONE!

FIGHTER! FIGHTER!

HE'S RIGHT, SKIPPER! PREPARE TO PULL OUT!

AS THE PILOT HAULED THE BOMBER OUT OF THE SCREAMING DIVE, THE TWO GUNNERS HOSEPIPED THE FIGHTER WITH TRACER . . .



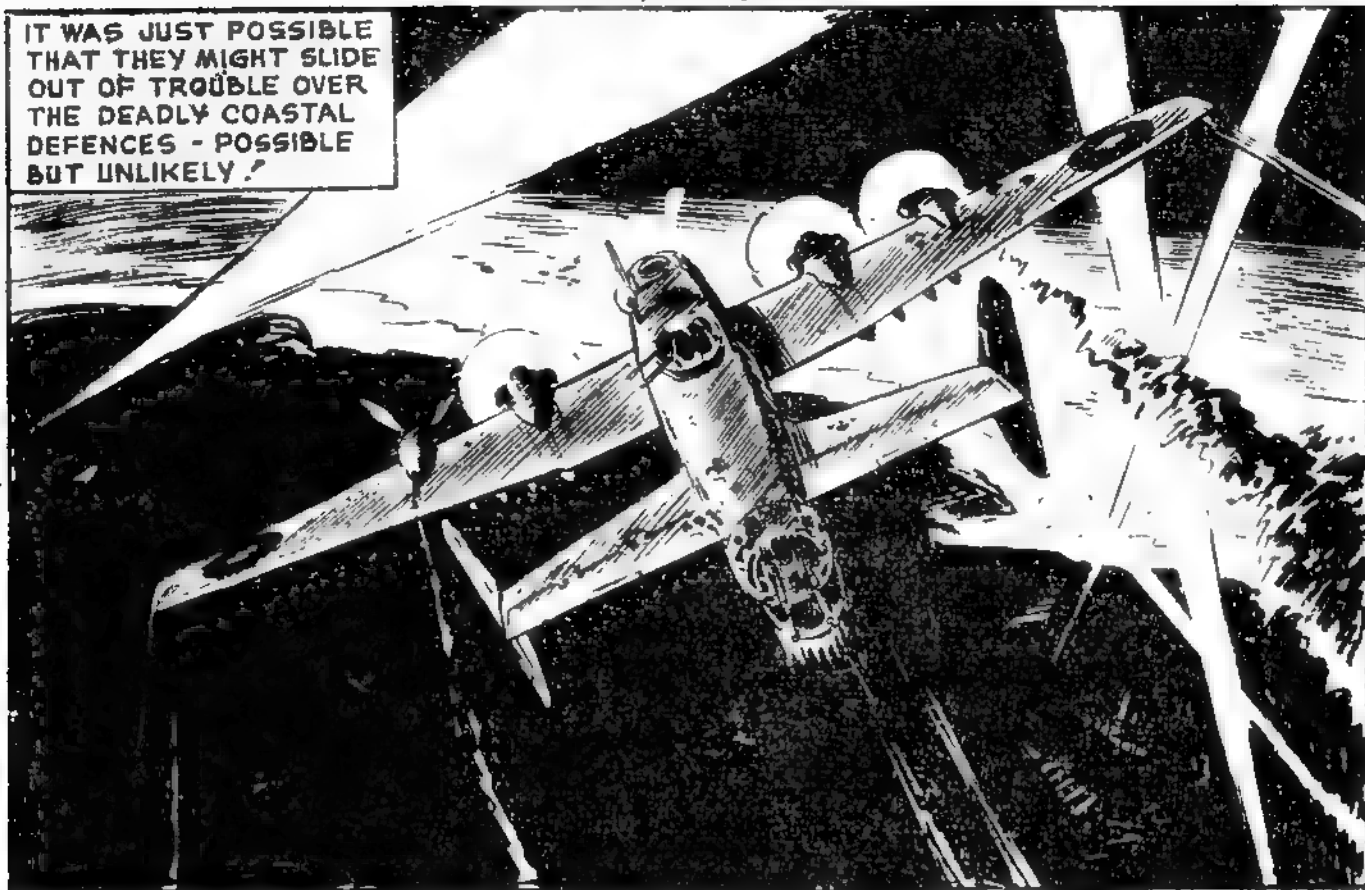
AS THEY CLIMBED AND TURNED AWAY FROM THE TARGET, THE FLAK FOUND THEM AGAIN.



THE FLAK BURSTS CLOSED IN...NEARER...NEARER . . .



IT WAS JUST POSSIBLE
THAT THEY MIGHT SLIDE
OUT OF TROUBLE OVER
THE DEADLY COASTAL
DEFENCES - POSSIBLE
BUT UNLIKELY !



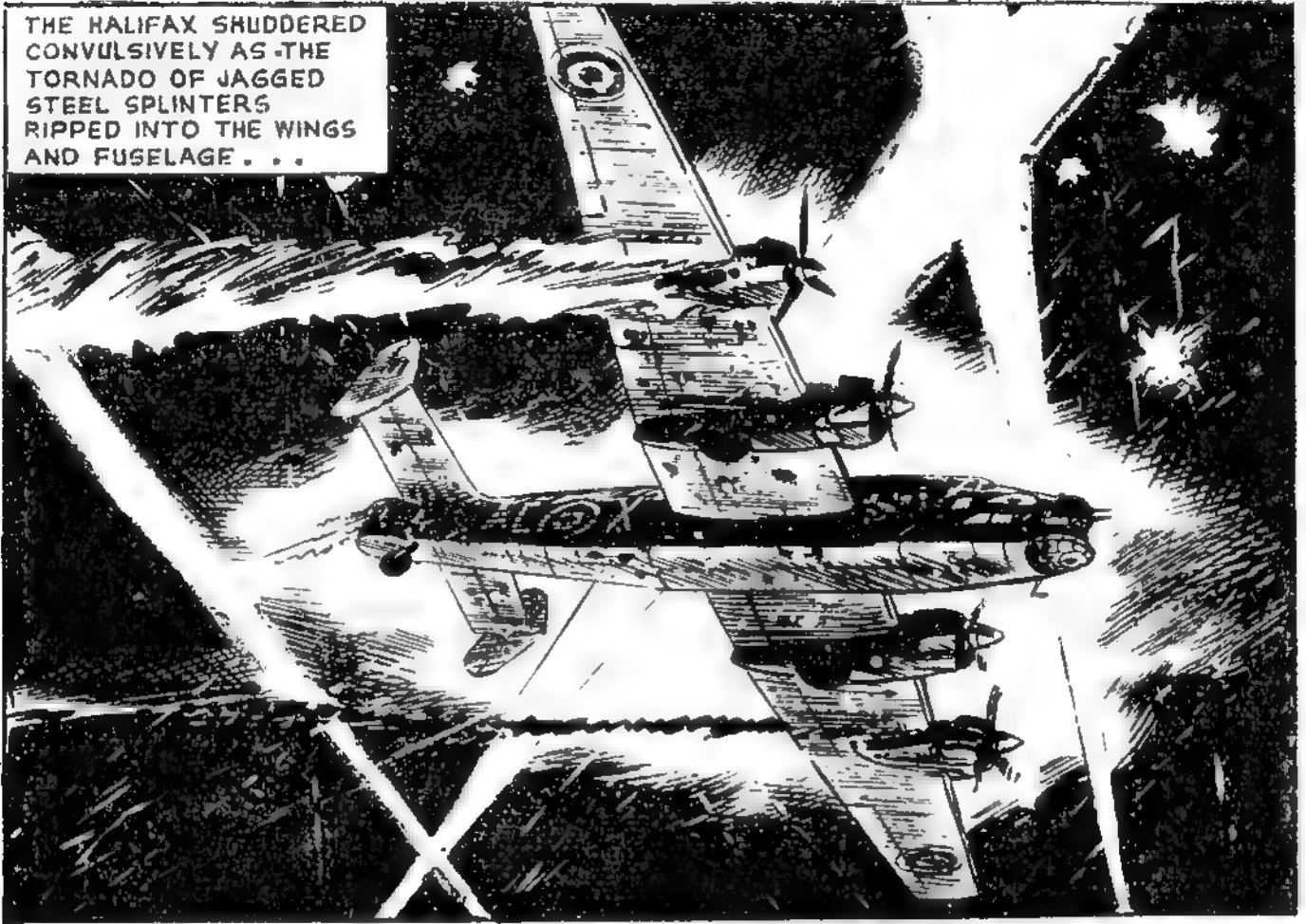
LIKE A DISTURBED NEST OF HORNETS,
THE LIGHT FLAK FLASHED TOWARDS
THEM...

AAAGH !

PULL HER
OUT,
SKIPPER !



THE HALIFAX SHUDDERED CONVULSIVELY AS THE TORNADO OF JAGGED STEEL SPLINTERS RIPPED INTO THE WINGS AND FUSELAGE . . .



THE PILOT LOOKED AROUND HIM DAZEDLY AS HE RECEIVED NO ANSWER TO HIS CALLS ON THE INTERCOMM. THE LIGHT FLAK HAD RAKED THE LIMPING BOMBER FROM STEM TO STERN. ON TAKING STOCK OF THE SITUATION, THE PILOT FOUND THAT ONLY BOB WOULD ANSWER ON INTERCOMM . . .

HULLO, REAR GUNNER! CAN YOU HEAR ME? COME UP FRONT! CHECK ON THE OTHERS...



The Whispering Death

BOB CLAMBERED OUT OF THE REAR TURRET AND AS HE PASSED ALONG THE SHOT-RIDDED FUSELAGE, HE SAW THE MID-UPPER GUNNER SLUMPED LIFELESS OVER HIS GUNS. HE CROSSED THE MAIN SPAR . . .

GREAT HEAVENS!
SO THIS IS WHAT
THEY MEAN BY FLAK!
IT'S MURDER . . .



ONLY HE AND THE PILOT WERE ALIVE!

ALL RIGHT, SNAP OUT OF IT, DANVERS!
WE'VE GOT TO GET HOME! WE'LL START
UP THE STARBOARD OUTER AGAIN AND
SEE WHAT HAPPENS! THE SWITCH
IS THERE!

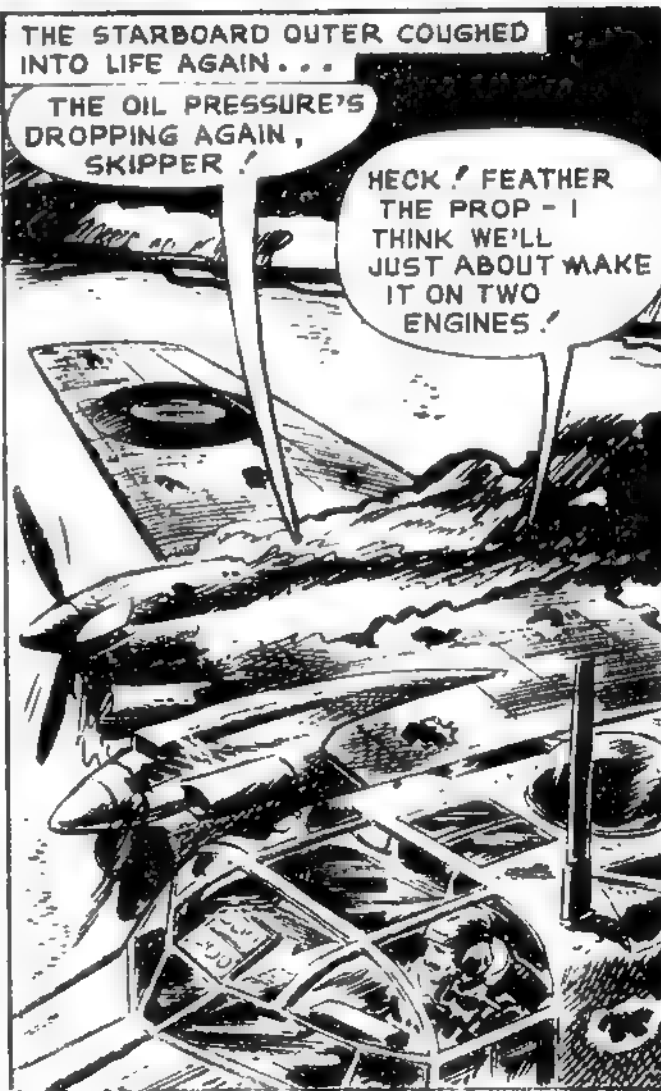


Y-YES,
SKIPPER!

THE STARBOARD OUTER COUGHED
INTO LIFE AGAIN . . .

THE OIL PRESSURE'S
DROPPING AGAIN,
SKIPPER!

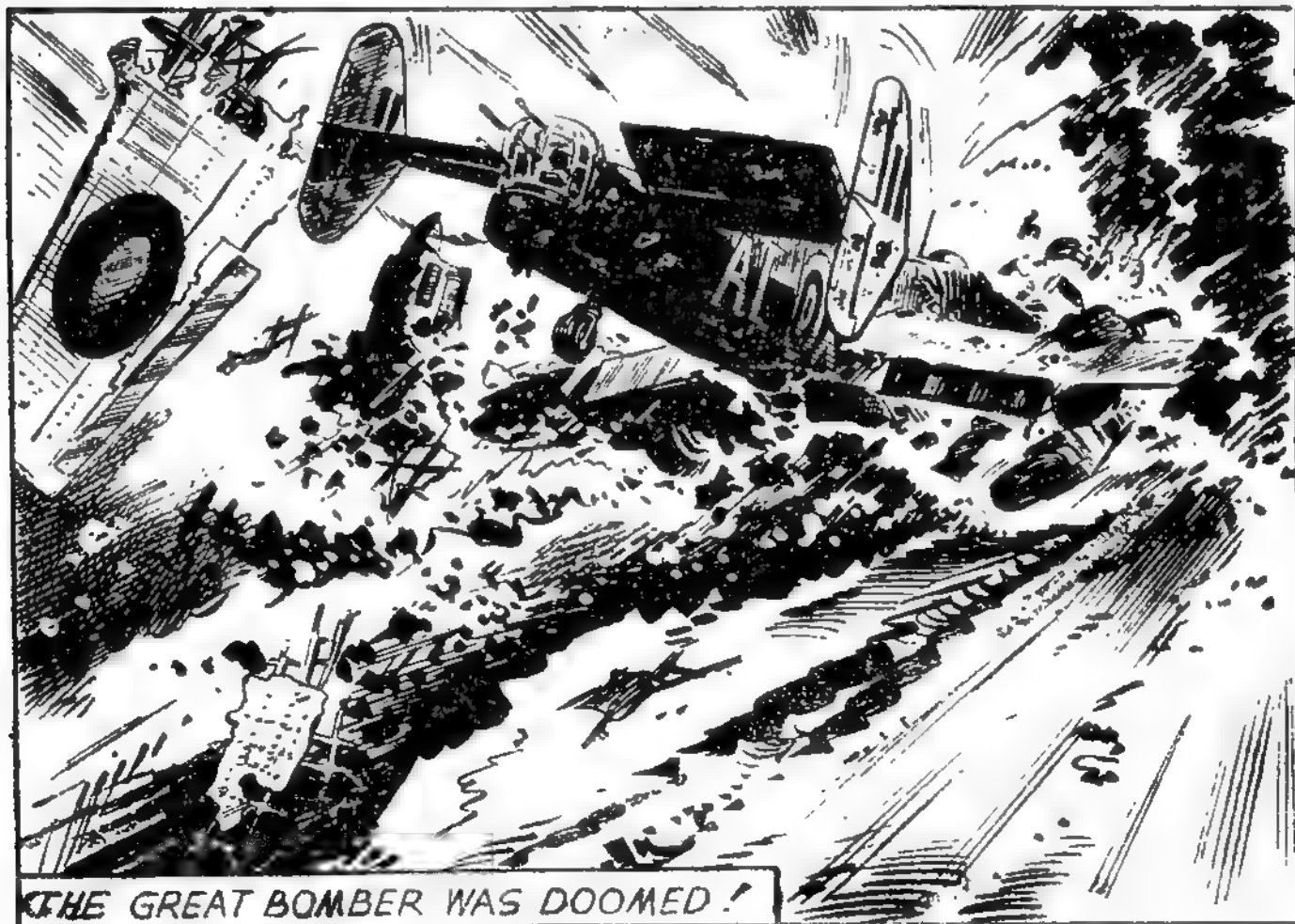
HECK! FEATHER
THE PROP - I
THINK WE'LL
JUST ABOUT MAKE
IT ON TWO
ENGINES!





BUT NO HUMAN POWER COULD DRAG
UP THE NOSE OF THE HALIFAX...

LOOK OUT,
DANVERS, BRACE
YOURSELF!



THE GREAT BOMBER WAS DOOMED!

AMBULANCES AND FIRE-TENDERS WERE ALREADY RACING TOWARDS THE WRECK . . .



SOMETHING STIRRED IN THE MASS OF TWISTED, SMOKING METAL . . .

HEY, BILL - BRING THAT STRETCHER QUICK! ONE OF THEM'S ALIVE...HURRY!



THE NIGHTMARE WAS OVER FOR BOB. MIRACULOUSLY HE WAS STILL ALIVE...

BOB! YOU OLD SON-OF-A-GUN - ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

HE'S OKAY, SIR... HOW I DON'T KNOW! HE MUST HAVE MORE LIVES THAN A CAT TO ESCAPE OUT OF THAT LOT!



Chapter 2. CAUTIOUS SQUADRON

THREE DAYS LATER, THE FUNERAL PARTY FIRED THEIR VOLLEY OVER THE GRAVES OF THE CREW OF L. LEATHER. MEANWHILE, ON THE AIRFIELD, THE HALIFAXES WERE AGAIN BEING ARMED FOR WAR...

SO IT GOES ON! TONIGHT SOME OTHER POOR BLIGHTERS WILL TAKE OFF AND COP THAT FLAK! IT'S MURDER, THAT'S WHAT IT IS...MURDER!



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE, COMMANDING OFFICER OF 950 FIGHTER-BOMBER SQUADRON, WAS AN ANGRY MAN...

THESE FELLERS, DANVERS AND ROBERTSON, ARE TWO DAYS OVERDUE IN REPORTING FOR DUTY! ANY NEWS OF THEM?



AS A MATTER OF FACT, SIR, A SIGNAL HAS JUST COME IN. IT SEEMS THAT -

WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WAS SOMEWHAT SOOTHED BY HIS ADJUTANT'S EXPLANATION...



ALL THE SQUADRON'S OPERATIONS HAD BEEN CARRIED OUT TO THE LETTER FOR FAIRBORNE ENFORCED A RIGID DISCIPLINE AMONG THE CREWS, BOTH IN THE AIR AND ON THE GROUND—INDIVIDUALISTS WERE STRONGLY DISCOURAGED.



The Whispering Death

THE WHEELS OF THE ONCOMING CAR LOCKED, BUT IT SKIDDED FORWARD ON THE LOOSE GRAVEL OF THE ROADWAY. . .

LOOK OUT,
BOB!



BOB HAD DRIVEN TO THE SQUADRON IN A DREAM. HIS MIND WAS STILL A KALEIDOSCOPE OF FLASHING SEARCHLIGHTS, FLAK-BURSTS, AND VIVID PICTURES OF HIS DYING BROTHER. HE HAD BRAKED INSTINCTIVELY AS THE DOG FLASHED ACROSS THE ROAD BEFORE HIM — BUT IT HAD BEEN TOO LATE.

YOU LUNATIC! DO YOU KNOW
WHAT YOU'VE DONE? YOU'VE
KILLED MY DOG!

I'M SORRY,
SIR!



SORRY, ARE YOU...
I'LL MAKE YOU SORRY!

IT WAS NOT UNTIL THAT AFTERNOON THAT THE ADJUTANT JUDGED IT SAFE TO INTRODUCE THE NEW CREW FORMALLY TO THEIR C.O. . . .

I'M SORRY FOR WHAT I DID TO HIS DOG, ANGUS! BUT, HANG IT! I'VE GOT A FEW THINGS ON MY MIND!

WELL, WAIT A DAY OR TWO, LADDIE, BEFORE YOU START LETTING THEM OUT!

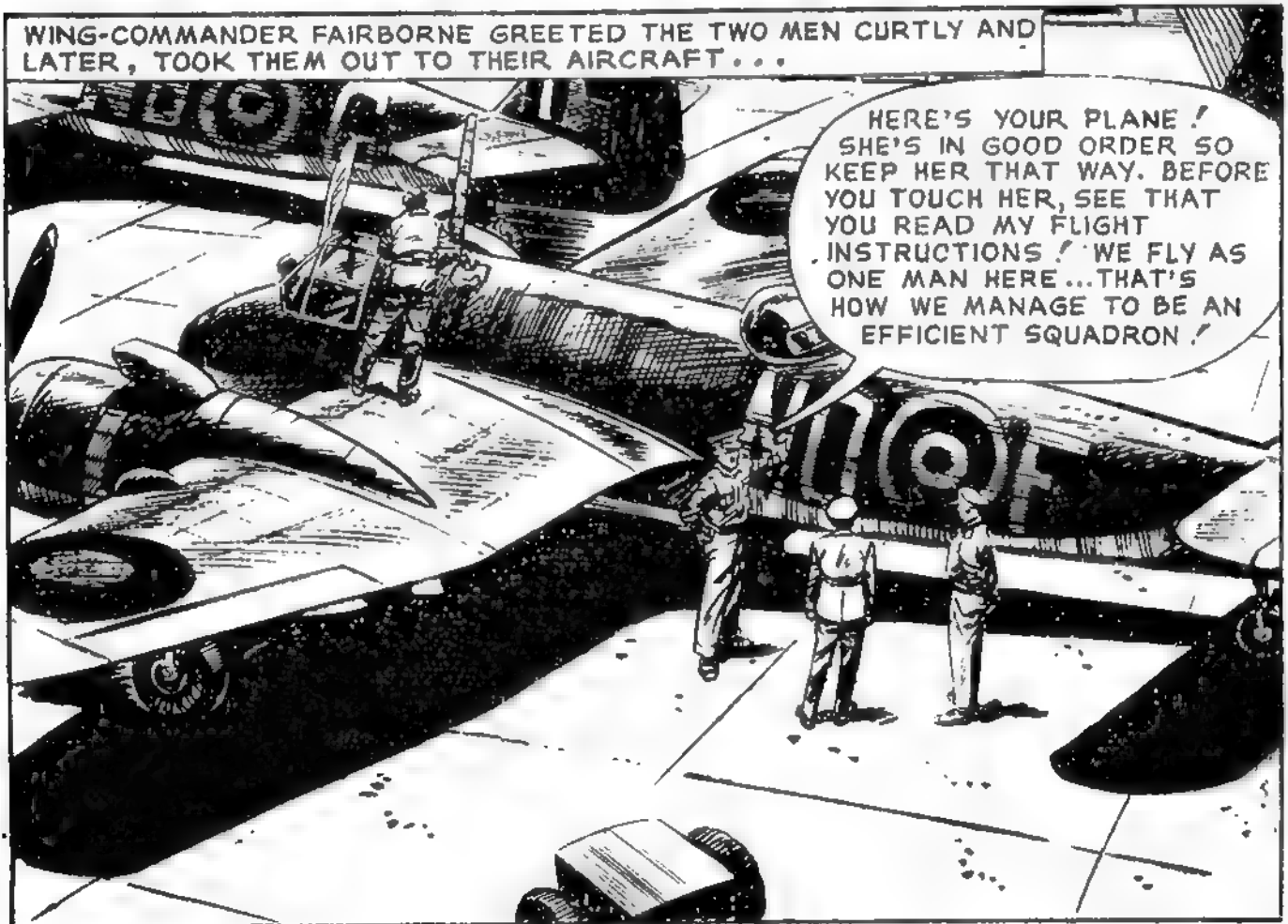
DANVERS AND ROBERTSON TO REPORT, SIR!

HM! I SUPPOSE I'LL HAVE TO OVERLOOK IT... BUT HE'LL HAVE TO BEHAVE, BY THUNDER!



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE GREETED THE TWO MEN CURTLY AND LATER, TOOK THEM OUT TO THEIR AIRCRAFT . . .

HERE'S YOUR PLANE! SHE'S IN GOOD ORDER SO KEEP HER THAT WAY. BEFORE YOU TOUCH HER, SEE THAT YOU READ MY FLIGHT INSTRUCTIONS! WE FLY AS ONE MAN HERE... THAT'S HOW WE MANAGE TO BE AN EFFICIENT SQUADRON!



The Whispering Death

FAIRBORNE HAD EXPLAINED THAT THE SQUADRON WAS MOSTLY ENGAGED IN LOW LEVEL SWEEPS OVER ENEMY-OCCUPIED HOLLAND, BELGIUM AND FRANCE.

I REALISE THAT YOU, DANVERS, HAVE HAD A SHAKY DO RECENTLY...BUT I DEMAND STEADY AND ACCURATE FORMATION FLYING FROM MY PILOTS!



WILL THERE BE A CHANCE TO GET AT SOME FLAK-EMPLACEMENTS, SIR?

FAIRBORNE REDDENED WITH SUDDEN ANGER...

NO, BY THUNDER, THERE WILL NOT! IN FACT...GET THIS STRAIGHT, DANVERS...IF YOU GO CHASING GLORY AND GONGS SHOOTING UP FLAK BATTERIES, I'LL COURT-MARTIAL YOU...IF YOU LIVE TO TELL THE TALE!



BOB AND ANGUS DRIFTED BACK TO THE MESS IN THE WAKE OF THEIR C.O....

NO MATTER WHAT HE SAYS, ANGUS, I'M TAKING EVERY OPPORTUNITY TO SHOOT UP FLAK, SEARCHLIGHTS, AND NIGHT FIGHTER STATIONS! THE C.O. CAN GO AND WHISTLE!

FOR PETE'S SAKE, KEEP YOUR VOICE DOWN.



BOB AND ANGUS HAD BARELY BEGUN TO GET USED TO THE WAYS OF AN OPERATIONAL SQUADRON WHEN THE BRIEFING FOR THE BIG SHOW TOOK PLACE.

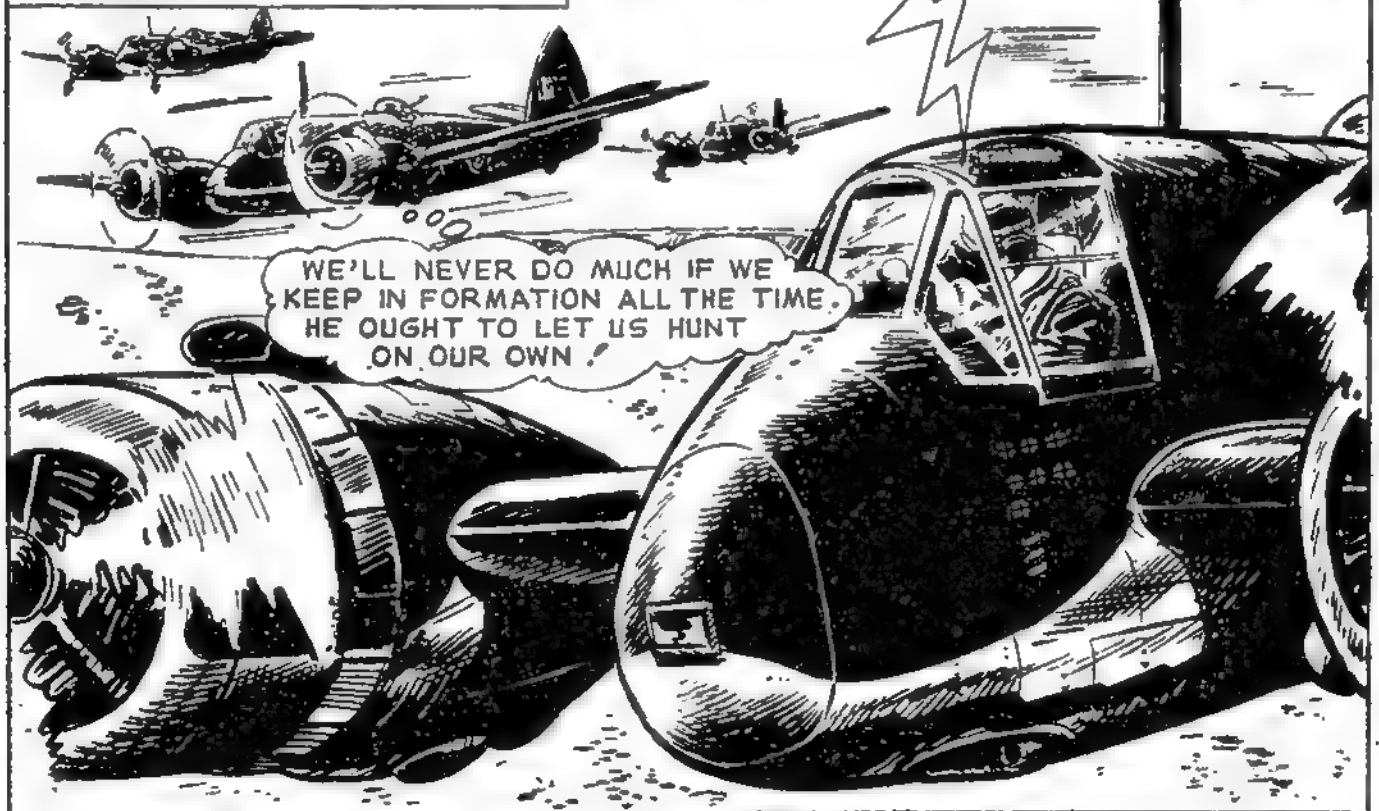
EVERY BEAUFIGHTER WILL BE FLYING ON THIS SWEEP AND WE'RE GOING TO SEE WHAT WE CAN FIND! BUT WE WILL, HOWEVER, KEEP CLEAR OF HORNETS' NESTS! DANVERS, YOU WILL FLY AS MY NUMBER TWO! I TRUST BY NOW YOU HAVE READ MY FLIGHT INSTRUCTIONS?

YESSIR!

THE SQUADRON FLEW INTO THE DAWN IN RIGID FORMATION. BOB HAD NO DIFFICULTY IN KEEPING HIS PLACE BEHIND HIS IRASCIBLE C.O...

HULLO, BLUE SHARKS! ENEMY COAST AHEAD. KEEP YOUR EYES OPEN... AND REMEMBER, KEEP TOGETHER!

WE'LL NEVER DO MUCH IF WE KEEP IN FORMATION ALL THE TIME. HE OUGHT TO LET US HUNT ON OUR OWN!



The Whispering Death

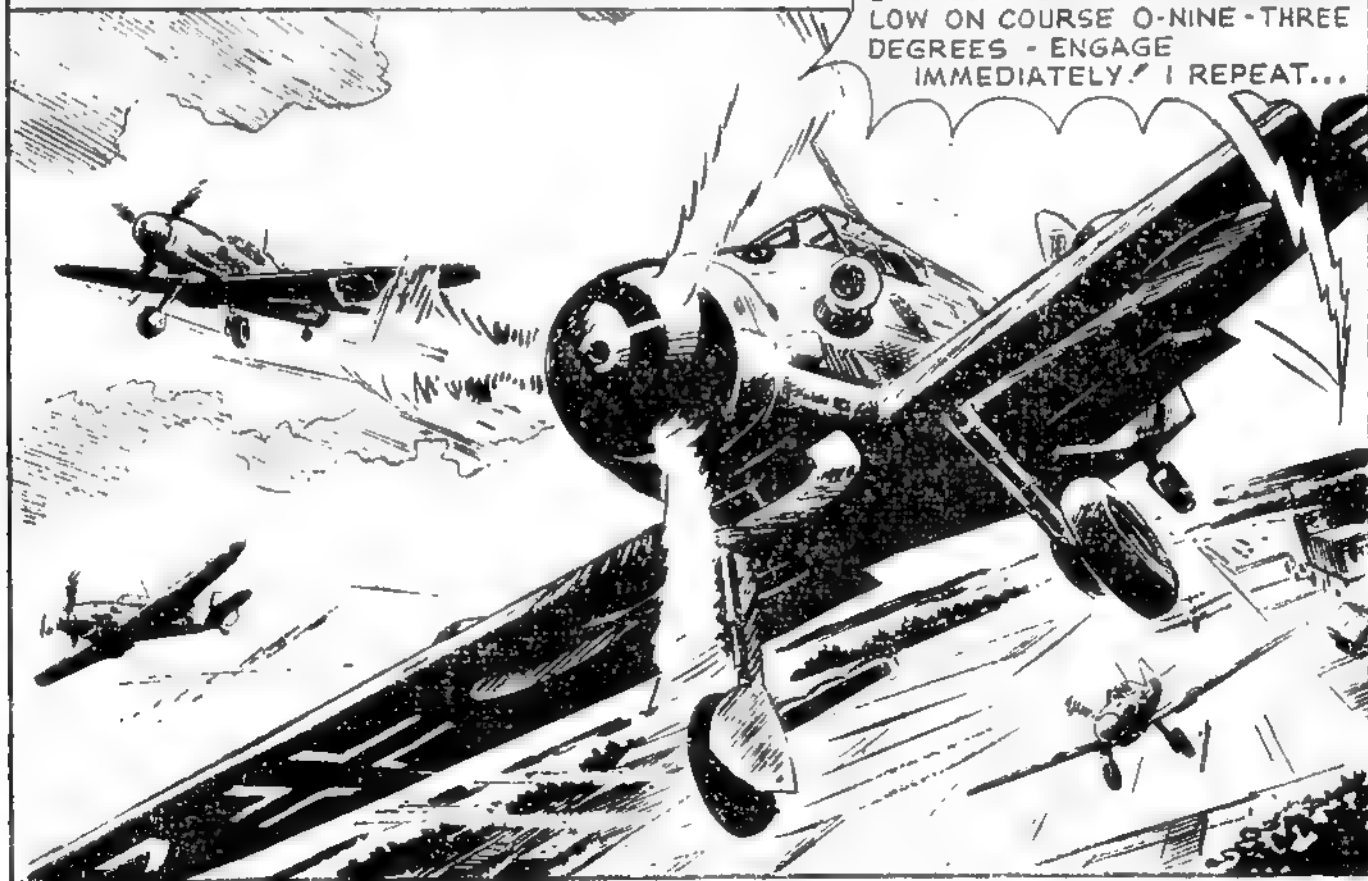
THE ENEMY'S LIGHT FLAK DEFENCES ALONG THE COAST WERE ALERT AND STREAMS OF TRACER DRIFTED UP TO MEET THE BEAUFIGHTERS.

MURDEROUS RATS! IF ONLY I COULD GET AT THEM FOR JUST TWO MINUTES!



TWENTY MILES AHEAD, TWO SQUADRONS OF ME.109'S WERE TAKING OFF ON ROUTINE PATROL...

ACHTUNG, ACHTUNG!
BRITISH FIGHTERS COMING IN
LOW ON COURSE O-NINE-THREE
DEGREES - ENGAGE
IMMEDIATELY! I REPEAT...



THE MESSERSCHMITTS NEARLY CAUGHT THE BEAUFIGHTERS UNAWARES - BUT WING COMMANDER FAIRBORNE ISSUED SWIFT ORDERS FOR EVASIVE ACTION...



IMMEDIATELY, THE WHOLE WELL-DISCIPLINED TEAM ZOOMED UP TOWARDS THE SHELTER OF THE CLOUDS ...EXCEPT FOR BOB DANVERS!



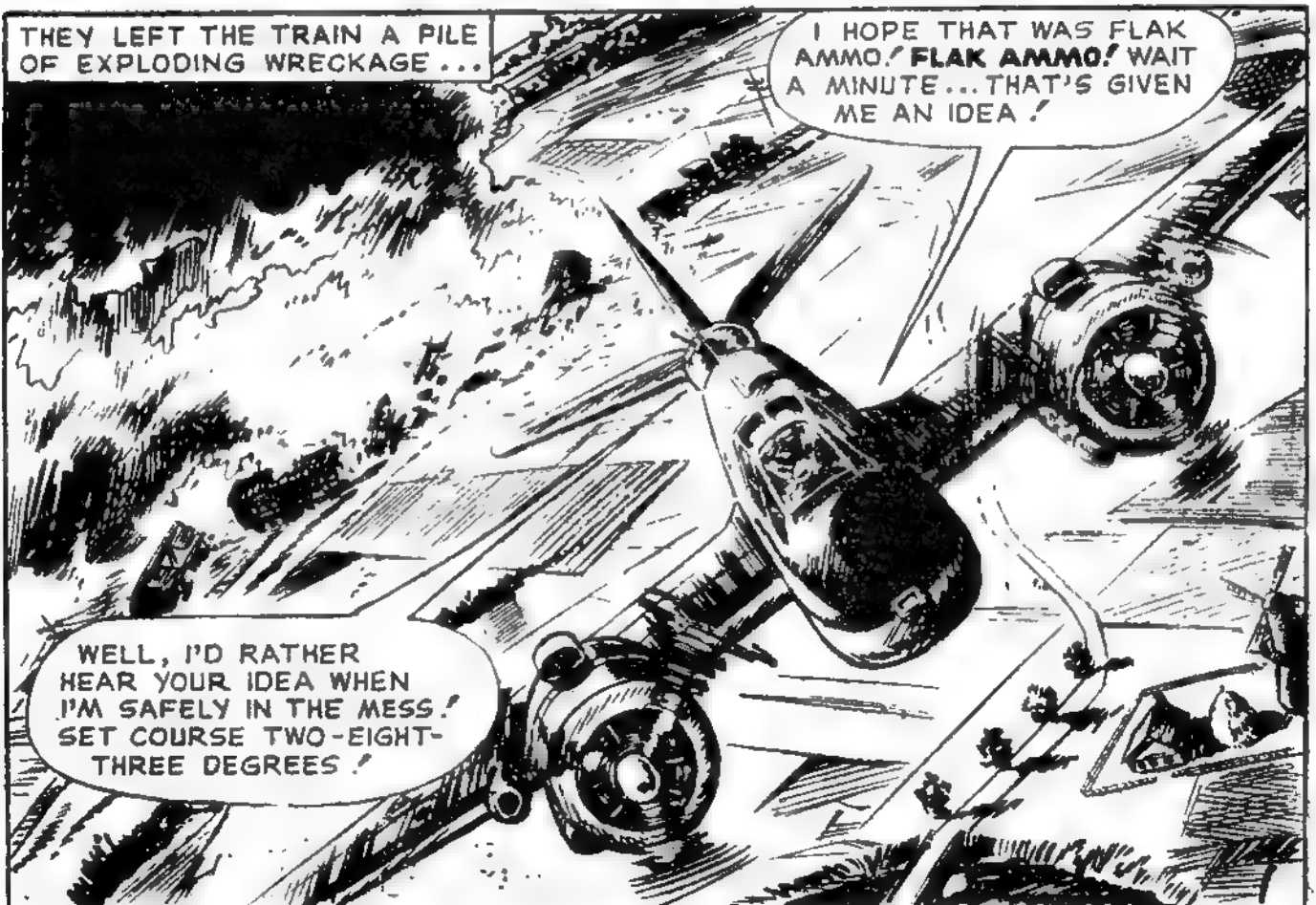
The Whispering Death



BOB INSTANTLY SWUNG THE NOSE ROUND, STEADIED THE PLANE AND THUMBED THE CANNON INTO BLAZING LIFE...



THEY LEFT THE TRAIN A PILE OF EXPLODING WRECKAGE...

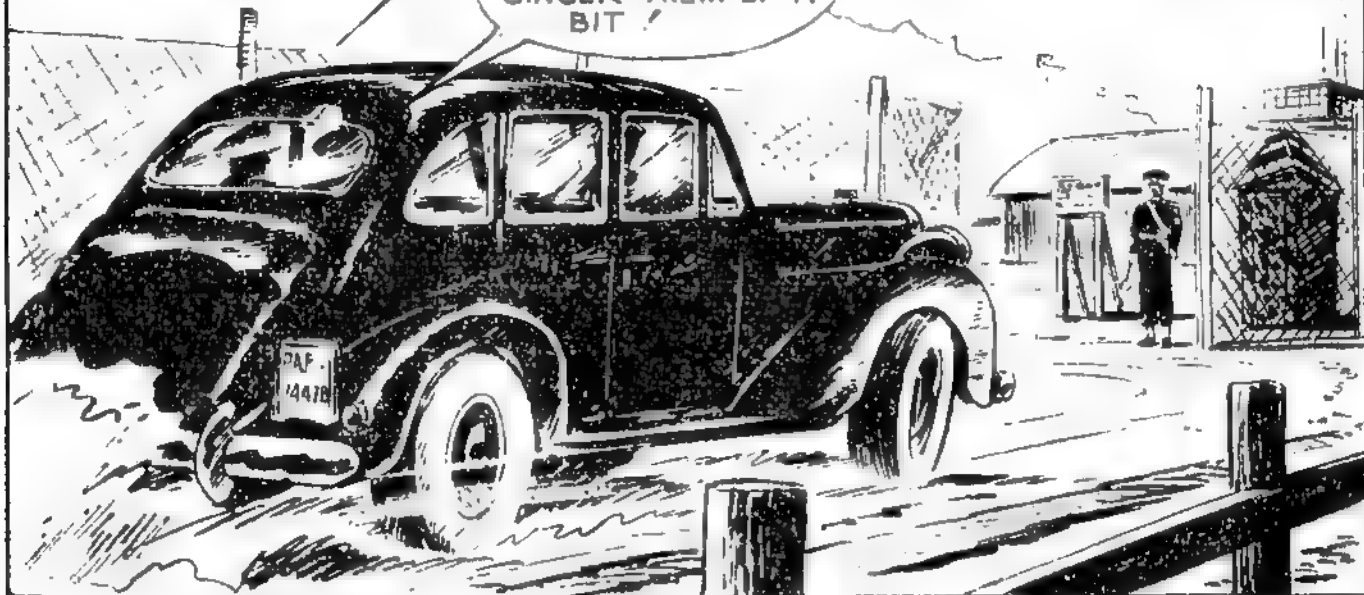


The Whispering Death

WHILE THE SQUADRON'S SWEEP WAS IN PROGRESS, A STAFF CAR WAS CARRYING A SENIOR R.A.F. OFFICER AND HIS AIDE-DE-CAMP TO THE STATION...

IT'S RATHER DIFFICULT, REALLY, AS FAIRBORNE SEEMS A GOOD C.O.! THE FACT IS, HOWEVER, THAT THE SQUADRON HAVE DONE NOTHING WORTHWHILE FOR NINE MONTHS!

...AND WE'RE TO GINGER THEM UP A BIT!



AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL WAS IN TIME TO SEE FAIRBORNE LEAD HIS SQUADRON IN TO LAND...

ARE THEY ALL THERE, SQUADRON LEADER?



WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WAS THOROUGHLY ANNOYED. THE MESSENGER'S NEWS THAT BRASS-HATS HAD ARRIVED DID NOTHING TO SWEETEN HIS TEMPER. . . .

WHAT THE DEUCE DO THEY WANT SNOOPING AROUND HERE? ANYWAY, BRASS-HATS OR NO BRASS-HATS, SEE THAT DANVERS IS SENT TO ME AS SOON AS HE LANDS . . . IF HE LANDS !

YESSIR !



ALL THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL'S TACT COULD NOT CONCEAL THE REAL REASON FOR THE VISIT...

I SEE, GENTLEMEN ! IN SHORT, YOU THINK THAT I'M A COWARD AND THAT THE WHOLE SQUADRON'S A USELESS BUNCH OF...

COME, COME, FAIRBORNE - ALL WE'RE SAYING IS THAT THE SQUADRON HASN'T HAD ANY WILD SUCCESSES LATELY !



AT THAT AWKWARD MOMENT, BOB DANVERS KNOCKED AND ENTERED THE OFFICE.

WELL, GENTLEMEN, HERE'S THE TYPE OF MAN YOU PROBABLY WANT AS C.O. IRRESPONSIBLE - DEAF TO ORDERS - RECKLESS! DID I OR DID I NOT TELL YOU TO RE-FORM AT ANGELS TEN?

YESSIR!

THE IRATE C.O. GAVE THE YOUNG PILOT A THOROUGH DRESSING DOWN. THEN HE TURNED DISGUSTEDLY AWAY FROM HIM...

I'VE FOUND THAT MY METHOD OF OPERATING WORKS, SIR! WE MAY NOT HAVE HAD SPECTACULAR SUCCESSES BUT WE'VE KEPT JERRY ON THE HOP, AND WE'VE SUFFERED NO LOSSES!

QUITE! QUITE, WING COMMANDER FAIRBORNE! ER - DANVERS - WHAT DID YOU DO AFTER YOU BROKE AWAY FROM THE SQUADRON?

PERHAPS THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL HAD NOTED THE EXCITED GLEAM IN THE PILOT'S EYE. WHILE FAIRBORNE FROWNEED, BOB REPORTED HIS SUCCESS, AND WENT ON TO ADVANCE HIS IDEA FOR FURTHER ATTACKS.

WELL, SIR! IF WE COULD HAVE THE ROUTE AND TIME TABLES OF AMMO TRAINS...ESPECIALLY IN THE RUHR REGION—WE COULD INTERCEPT AND ATTACK THEM! IT MIGHT MESS UP THE FLAK DEFENCES AND GIVE THE BOMBER BOYS A CHANCE!

HMM!

WHEN DANVERS HAD BEEN DISMISSED...

NOW, LOOK HERE, FAIRBORNE! THAT LAD'S IDEA MAY BE A WINNER OR IT MAY BE A DUD, BUT WE'LL GIVE IT A GO!

IF IT'S AN ORDER, SIR!

YOU MAY TAKE IT THAT IT /S AN ORDER!

A COLD RECEPTION AWAITED BOB IN THE MESS...

HERE COMES DEATH-OR-GLORY-DANVERS!

I BET OLD FAIRBORNE FIXED HIM!

LET'S HOPE HE'LL SETTLE DOWN AND BEHAVE LIKE A GOOD LITTLE GENTLEMAN!

The Whispering Death

A WAVE OF DEPRESSION CAME OVER BOB. IF THE C.O. COULD SEE WHAT THE WAR WAS LIKE FOR THE BOMBER BOYS, HE WOULD NOT BE SO CAREFUL ABOUT THE PAINT ON HIS PRECIOUS AEROPLANES!

OCH, LADDIE, FORGET IT! I RECKON YOUR BROTHER WOULD BE HAPPY WITH THE SCORE AS IT IS - AFTER TODAY!

WELL, I'M NOT SATISFIED, ANGUS... AND THEY CAN ALL GO HANG, I'LL HAVE MY OWN PRIVATE WAR!



BUT THAT AFTERNOON, BOB AND ANGUS WERE CALLED TO THE OPERATIONS ROOM...

YOUR IDEA HAS BEEN CONSIDERED, DANVERS, AND IT'S BEEN DECIDED THAT YOU HAVE THE FIRST GO! NOW LISTEN VERY CAREFULLY... THIS IS THE SET-UP...



IT HAD BEEN LEARNED THAT AT 0750 HRS. THE FOLLOWING MORNING, AN AMMUNITION TRAIN WAS SCHEDULED TO ARRIVE AT A LITTLE STATION BETWEEN BREMEN AND HAMBURG.

SO YOU SEE, DANVERS, YOUR TIMING WILL NEED TO BE RIGHT ON THE BEAM!

FINE, SIR! WE'LL BE THERE! LET'S HOPE THE JERRY TRAINS ARE MORE PUNCTUAL THAN OURS!

BEFORE DAWN THE NEXT MORNING, WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WAS IN FLYING CONTROL TO SEE BOB AND ANGUS OFF ON THEIR MISSION...

THIS FELLER DANVERS IS ONE OF THESE BLIGHTERS WHO CAN'T HELP ATTRACTING TROUBLE WHEREVER THEY GO! HE'S CERTAINLY STUCK HIS NECK OUT THIS TIME!



HULLO, BLUE SHARK FOUR ZERO! YOU MAY TAXI ROUND AND TAKE OFF WHEN YOU'RE READY...OVER!

Chapter 3. MISSING TARGET

THE BEAUFIGHTER CROSSED THE NORTH SEA AT WAVE TOP HEIGHT...

AT LAST I FEEL AS IF I WAS REALLY DOING SOMETHING USEFUL



WELL, LET'S HOPE YOU'LL BE SATISFIED. I'M NOT SO KEEN ON CHASING AMMUNITION TRAINS FOR THE REST OF THE WAR... THERE'S NO FUTURE IN IT!

THEY CERTAINLY TOOK THE ENEMY COASTAL DEFENCES BY SURPRISE...



EIN ENGLANDER!

HIMMEL!

BUT THERE WAS ONE GERMAN, A RAILWAY SIGNALMAN, WHO WAS WIDE AWAKE AND WITH WIT ENOUGH TO THINK OF A LIKELY TARGET FOR THE ENGLISH PLANE.

HALLO ! HALLO !
STOP THE AMMUNITION
TRAIN ! THERE IS AN
ENGLISH FIGHTER ON
THE WAY OVER !



ANGUS' NAVIGATION BROUGHT THE BEAUFIGHTER OVER THE INTERCEPTION POINT DEAD ON TIME...

SOMEONE'S GIVEN US SOME
DUFF GEN ! THERE'S NO SIGN
OF A TRAIN !

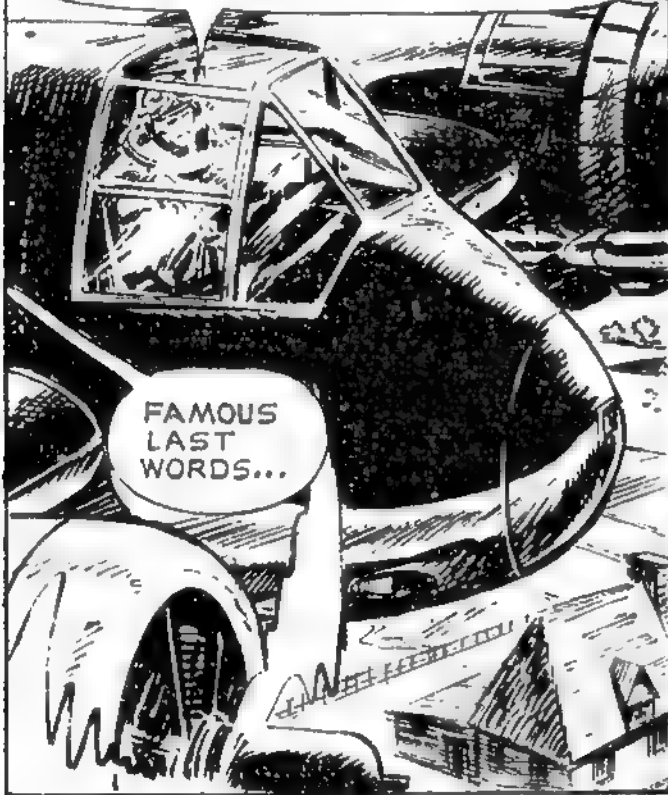
I WONDER IF IT'S
BEEN OR WHETHER
IT'S STILL DUE
TO COME !



A DECISION HAD TO BE
TAKEN...AND QUICKLY...

IT'S PROBABLY GONE BY!
I'M GOING TO FOLLOW THE RAILWAY
LINE...WE MAY CATCH UP WITH IT!

FAMOUS
LAST
WORDS...



BUT THE LINE WAS DESERTED...

WE'VE HAD IT! WE'D BETTER GET
BACK! SEE IF YOU CAN SEE SOMETHING
WORTH SHOOTING UP...PREFERABLY
A FLAK BATTERY!

YOU AND YOUR
PERISHING
FLAK!



THE PRACTICE OF FOLLOWING A
RAILWAY LINE HAD ALWAYS BEEN
DANGEROUS. BEFORE BOB HAD
TIME TO TAKE AVOIDING ACTION
THEY WERE OVER THE PERIMETER
OF HAMBURG! THEY WERE
HEADING FOR TROUBLE...
BIG TROUBLE!



LOOK AT THOSE
BARRAGE BALLOONS!
WE'LL HAVE TO
KEEP GOING!

THEY WERE TRAPPED...

THERE'S ONLY ONE
WAY OUT! HOLD
TIGHT, ANGUS!



THE DANGER SEEMED TO BRING OUT
THE LAST OUNCE OF BOB'S FLYING
SKILL AS HE BROUGHT THE
BEAUFIGHTER DOWN TO ZERO FEET.

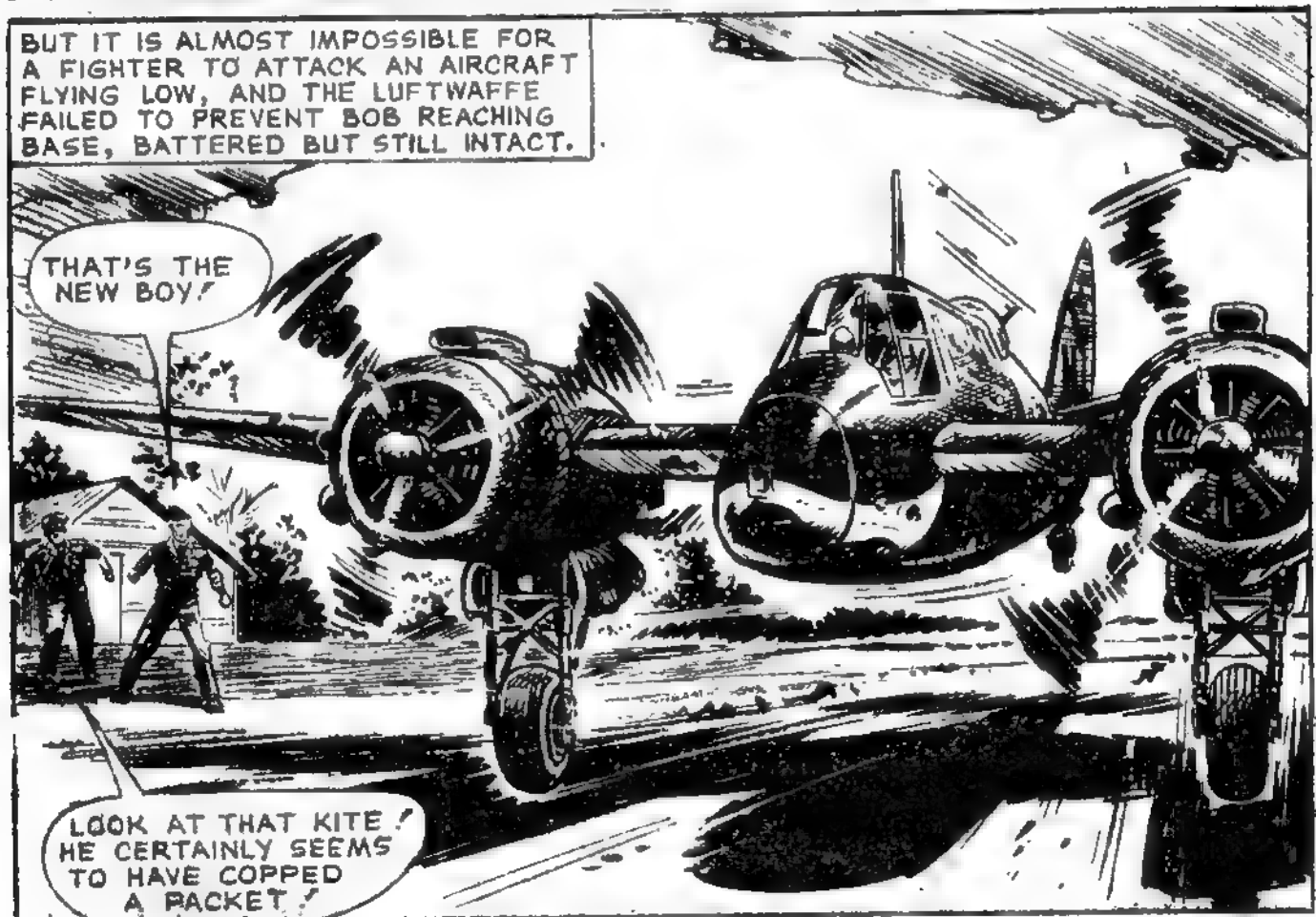
THOSE BLIGHTERS
IN THAT SHIP ARE
LOOKING DOWN
AT US!



THEY HAD THE FINAL STAGE
OF THE GAUNTLET...



BUT IT IS ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR
A FIGHTER TO ATTACK AN AIRCRAFT
FLYING LOW, AND THE LUFTWAFFE
FAILED TO PREVENT BOB REACHING
BASE, BATTERED BUT STILL INTACT.



DESPITE THE FAILURE OF THE OPERATION, BOB STILL HAD FAITH IN HIS PLAN . . .

WELL, THAT'S HOW IT WAS, SIR. I EXPECT IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE GET THE HANG OF THIS KIND OF TRIP.

AFTER TAKING ONE LOOK AT YOUR AIRCRAFT, DANVERS, I PROMISE YOU IT WILL BE SOME TIME BEFORE WE LET YOU OUT AGAIN!



BUT WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE HAD FORGOTTEN HIS VISITORS! AFTER BOB HAD LEFT THE ROOM . . .

IT'S NOT THE LAD'S FAULT FAIRBORNE! IT'S THE INTELLIGENCE REPORTS...THEY QUITE OFTEN SLIP UP, YOU KNOW! NOW, IT APPEARS THAT TOMORROW EVENING THREE AMMUNITION TRAINS WILL BE LEAVING OSNABRUCK...I'M SENDING THE WHOLE SQUADRON!



FAIRBORNE ALMOST EXPLODED...

THE WHOLE SQUADRON -
IT'S MADNESS! DANVERS -
WITH DUE RESPECT TO YOU,
SIR...IS A HARE-BRAINED
FOOL!

THAT WILL DO,
WING-
COMMANDER!



THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL WAS DETERMINED THAT THE SQUADRON SHOULD CARRY OUT THE ATTACK AND THE C.O. WAS NOT IN A VERY GOOD MOOD WHEN HE CONDUCTED THE BRIEFING...

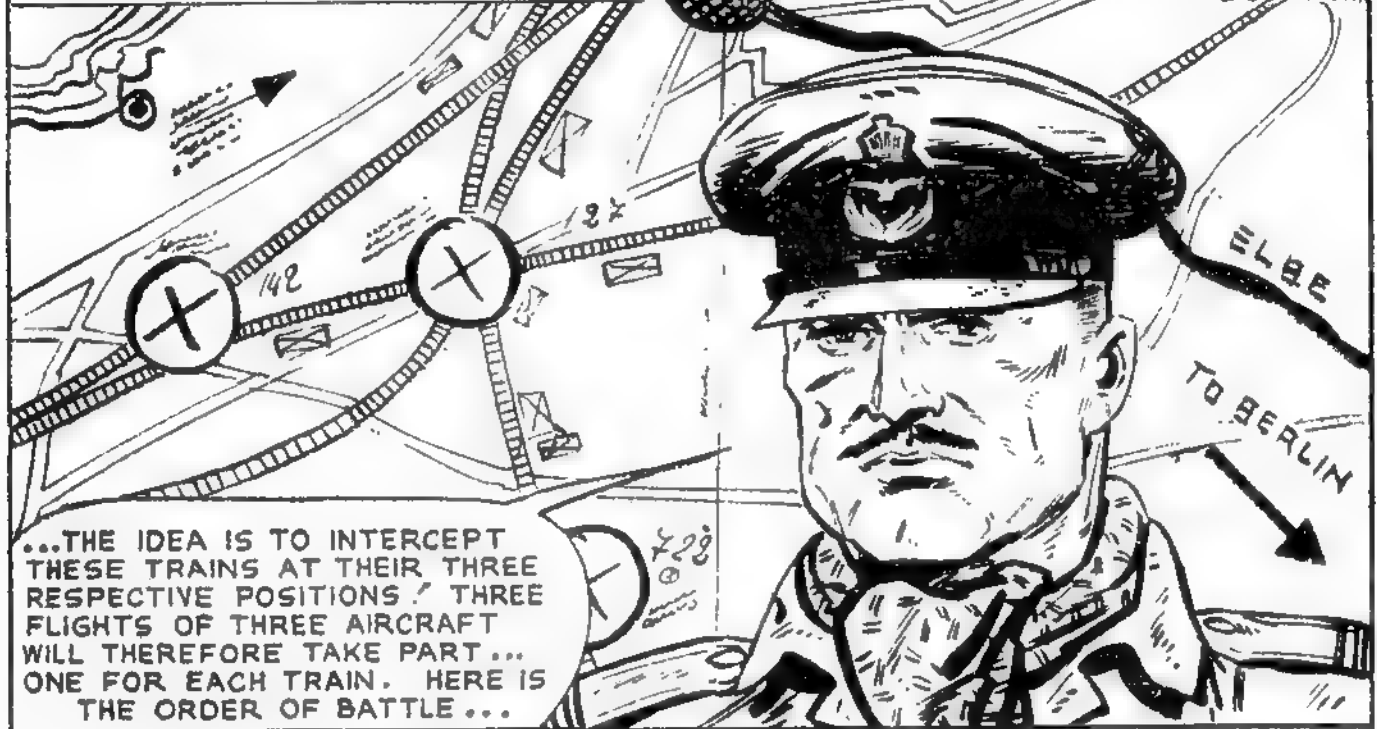
WELL, GENTLEMEN... YOU'LL BE GLAD TO
HEAR THAT WE ARE TO GO ON A LITTLE
STOOGIE BY COURTESY OF PILOT
OFFICER DANVERS!

WHY TAKE IT
OUT ON ME?

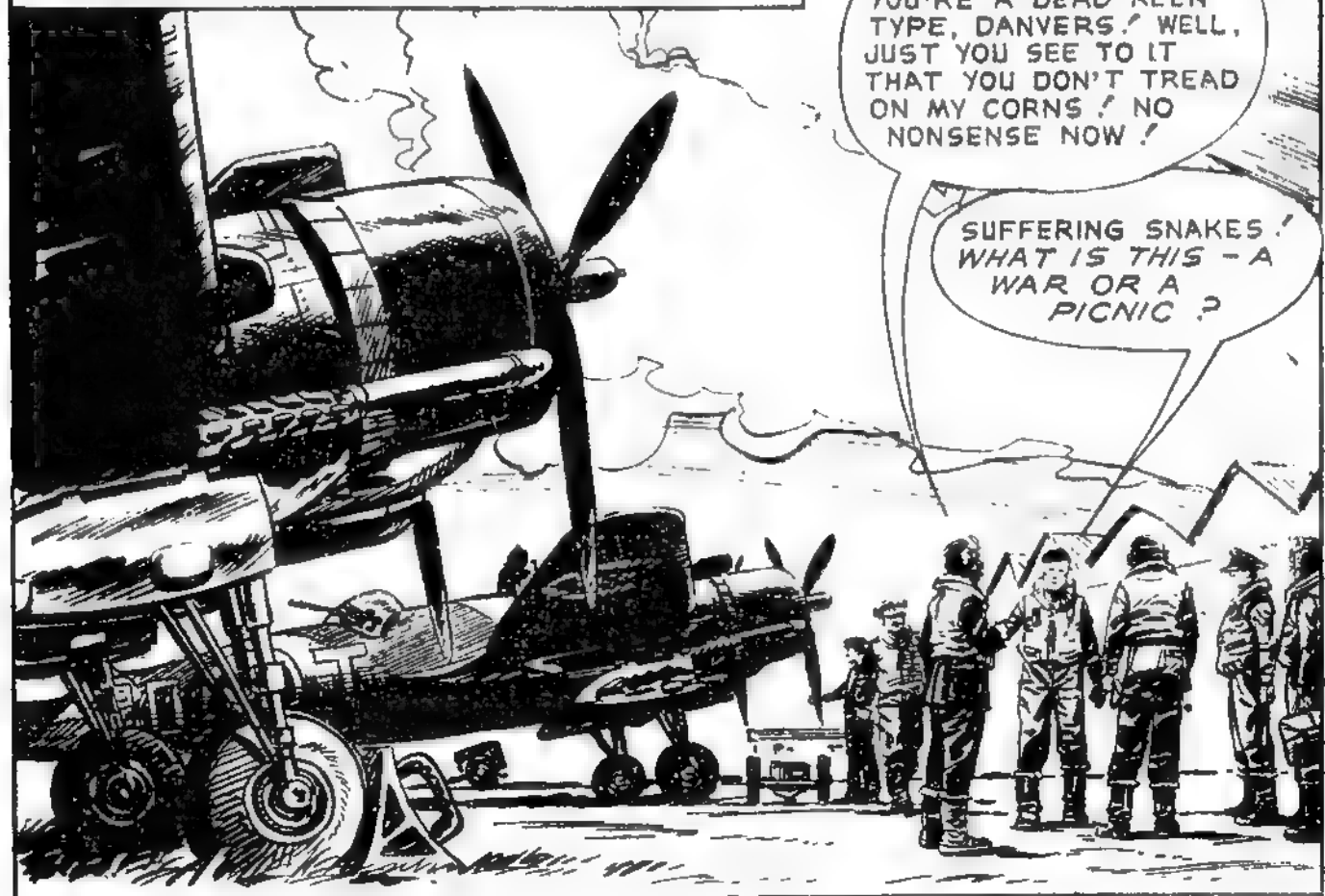
STEADY,
BOB!



THREE TRAINS WERE SCHEDULED TO LEAVE OSNABRUCK FOR THE HAMBURG AREA AT HALF-HOURLY INTERVALS...



THAT AFTERNOON, BOB AND ANGUS MET THE OTHER TWO CREWS THAT WERE TO FLY WITH THEM...



The Whispering Death

BOB'S OUTBURST REACHED FAIRBORNE'S EARS, AND HE STRODE ANGRILY OVER TO THE YOUNG PILOT...



THEY TOOK OFF INTO A DULL, OVERCAST SUMMER EVENING...

I DON'T LIKE IT, SIR! THE VISIBILITY'S CLAMPING DOWN!



Chapter 4. NIGHT INTRUDERS

BUT IT WAS NOT SEA MIST AS SQUADRON LEADER WALSH'S FLIGHT SOON FOUND OUT...

HULLO, BLUE SHARKS TWO AND THREE! THIS IS BLUE SHARK LEADER! BREAK FORMATION AND CONTINUE INDEPENDENTLY... OVER!



PROGRESS OF THE THREE FLIGHTS WAS REACHING THE CONTROL ROOM AT BASE, CAUSING CONCERN...

FAIRBORNE AND MACINTYRE'S FLIGHTS HAVE HAD TO TURN BACK...ICING!

HMM! WELL, IF ONLY ONE OF THEM MAKES IT, IT'LL BE WORTH IT! LET ME KNOW IF ANYONE ELSE TURNS BACK!



The Whispering Death

THE BAD WEATHER CLEARED NEAR THE ENEMY COAST, LEAVING THE THREE REMAINING BEAUFIGHTERS HIGH AND VULNERABLE. GERMAN RADAR HAD PLOTTED THEIR APPROACH AND THE RECEPTION COMMITTEE WAS WAITING...

SO THERE ARE THE ENGLANDERS!
GO INTO THE KILL!

HULLO BLUE SHARKS -
CLOSE FORMATION!



BUT THE MESSERSCHMITTS WERE ALREADY LANCING DOWN OUT OF THE DARKENING SKY, WHITE VAPOUR TRAILS STRETCHING THINLY BEHIND THEM...

THE BLIGHTERS ARE
ON TO US,
ANGUS!

THEY MUST
HAVE BEEN
WAITING!



BOB FLUNG HIS MACHINE ON ONE WING TIP AND OPENED THE BOOSTERS...

GET BACK INTO THE CLOUDS, LADDIE!

CLOUDS NOTHING! I'M GOING DOWN LOW - WE'RE PRESSING ON!

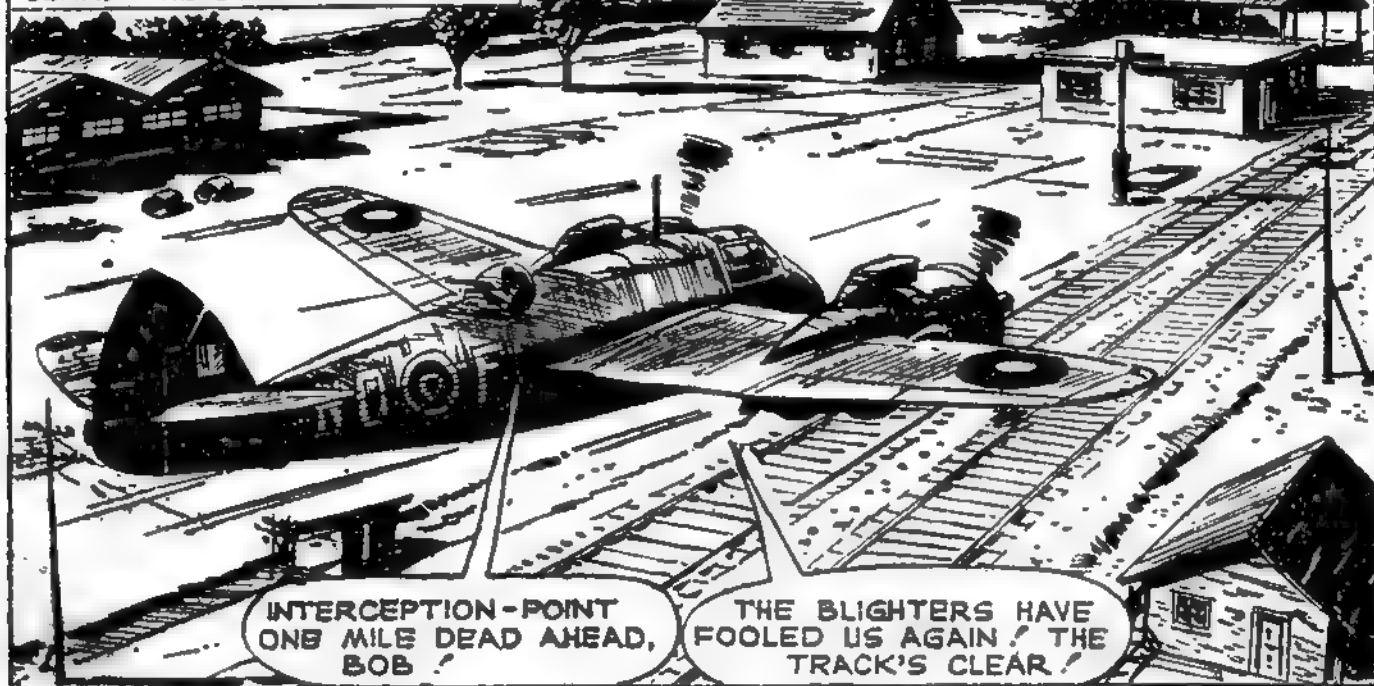
THE BEAUFIGHTER THUNDERED DOWN TO ROOF-TOP HEIGHT AND WHEN ONE OF THE GERMAN FIGHTERS FAILED TO AVOID A SOARING STEEPLE, THE OTHERS GAVE UP THE PURSUIT...

NICE WORK, BOB! ONE'S JUST PRANGED A CHURCH STEEPLE! WE SHOULD BE ON TARGET IN EXACTLY ONE AND THREE QUARTER MINUTES!

LET'S HOPE THIS TRAIN'S RUNNING TO SCHEDULE!

The Whispering Death

BUT THE TRAIN HAD BEEN
SIGNALLED TO STOP. THE
GERMANS WERE QUICK TO
LEARN THE LESSONS OF WAR!



INTERCEPTION-POINT
ONE MILE DEAD AHEAD,
BOB!

THE BLIGHTERS HAVE
FOOLED US AGAIN! THE
TRACK'S CLEAR!

WAS THERE ENOUGH FUEL AND
DAYLIGHT LEFT TO FOLLOW THE LINE?
BOB DID NOT HESITATE...

I'M GOING TO FOLLOW
THE RAILWAY LINE -
BACK TRACKING
THIS TIME!

JUST AS YOU SAY,
LADDIE...BUT REMEMBER
THE LAST TIME!



THE AMMUNITION TRAIN HAD HALTED
IN A WOOD. ONLY A FEW MORE
MINUTES OF DAYLIGHT REMAINED
BEFORE IT WOULD BE SAFELY
CLOAKED BY DARKNESS...

LISTEN - LISTEN, KURT!
AN ENGLANDER
FIGHTER!

ACH, NONSENSE! IT'S
STEAM ESCAPING
FROM THAT LEAKING
PIPE UP FRONT!



The Whispering Death

47

BUT KURT HAD MADE
A BIG MISTAKE...

WE'VE FOUND IT! I'M
GOING STRAIGHT IN!

HIMMEL!
THE WHISPERING
DEATH!

THE PLANE WAS DIVING UPON THE GERMANS
BEFORE THEY REALISED IT. ITS EERILY SILENT,
LOW-LEVEL ATTACKS HAD ALREADY EARNED
FOR THE BEAUFIGHTER A GRIM NICKNAME.

A SUSTAINED BURST FROM
BOB'S FOUR CANNONS RIPPED
INTO THE EXPLOSIVE-FILLED
WAGONS...

WOW! NOW
LET'S GET TO
HECK OUT OF
HERE!



BACK AT THE SQUADRON,
THE TENSION MOUNTED...



THIS...WITH DUE RESPECT,
SIR...IS WHAT COMES OF THESE
DEATH OR GLORY OPERATIONS!
SIX AIRCRAFT TURNED BACK
ONE OF THOSE IN THE DRINK!
AND THE REST...HEAVEN KNOWS
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM!

IT WAS ANOTHER HOUR BEFORE BOB'S
BEAUFIGHTER LANDED AND THE FINAL
TALE COULD BE TOLD...

WE WERE SITTING DUCKS, SIR!
I DON'T THINK ONE OF THE
OTHERS GOT AWAY FROM
THOSE MESSERSCHMITTS!



THAT WAS BAD LUCK! STILL, YOU MADE
IT! WE MUST BE THANKFUL THAT THE TRIP
WASN'T ENTIRELY FOR NOTHING!

THE SQUADRON'S MORALE WAS VERY LOW AND MOST OF THE CREWS FELT THAT BOB AND ANGUS WERE DIRECTLY RESPONSIBLE...

THERE GOES DEATH-OR-GLORY DANVERS, THE PRIDE OF THE SERVICE!

IT WAS A GRIM DAY WHEN HE ARRIVED ON THE SQUADRON. HE'S SENDING THE OLD MAN ROUND THE BEND!



LATER THAT MORNING, BOB DANVERS MADE A REQUEST TO THE STATION ADJUTANT...

I SHOULD LIKE TO SEE THE C.O., SIR... IF POSSIBLE!

HMM! I'LL ASK HIM! YOU'RE NOT VERY POPULAR, JUST NOW, DANVERS!



BUT BOB WAS JUST THE MAN FAIRBORNE WANTED TO SEE. THE WING-COMMANDER FELT CONFIDENT THAT THE AIR VICE-MARSHAL WOULD LEAVE THE SQUADRON ALONE AFTER THE OPERATION FIASCO AND HE WANTED TO EMPHASISE THE POINT...

SO YOU SEE, DANVERS, FROM NOW ON, WE'LL CARRY ON AS BEFORE! THE JOB MAY BE HUM-DRUM BUT AT LEAST IT'LL GET DONE!



I AGREE, SIR! BUT I WOULD LIKE TO PUT FORWARD ANOTHER IDEA...

The Whispering Death

THE WING-COMMANDER
SHUDDERED . . .

IT OCCURS TO ME, SIR, THAT
FLAK IS ONLY ONE OF
JERRY'S WEAPONS. HE'S ALSO
GOT HIS FIGHTERS. BOMBER
COMMAND COMPLAIN THAT
MOST OF THEIR LOSSES ARE
CAUSED BY NIGHT-FIGHTERS.
WELL, SIR... AS WE KNOW
WHERE THE JERRY NIGHT-
FIGHTERS ARE BASED...
THE SOLUTION IS
OBVIOUS . . .

GIVE ME PATIENCE!
I KNOW WHAT'S COMING!

WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE THOUGHT THAT BOB WAS GOING TO
SUGGEST SUICIDAL DAYLIGHT SWEEPS ON NIGHT FIGHTER AERODROMES.
BUT HE WAS WRONG . . .

THE IDEA IS, SIR, THAT WHEN THE
BOMBER BOYS TAKE OFF ON A
TRIP... WE SHOULD MOVE INTO THE
NIGHT FIGHTERS' CIRCUITS
AHEAD OF THEM AND
ATTACK THE JERRIES...
EITHER AS THEY TAKE OFF
OR AS THEY LAND!

THE MAN'S
MAD...
STARK
STARING
MAD!

I DON'T AGREE,
FAIRBORNE - I
THINK THIS
MIGHT BE A
WINNER!



AND SO... MUCH AGAINST WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE'S JUDGMENT... THE OPERATION PASSED THE PLANNING STAGE...

ONCE AGAIN, GENTLEMEN, PILOT OFFICER DANVERS HAS HAD A BRILLIANT IDEA! TONIGHT WE SHALL BE JOINED BY TWO MORE BEAUFIGHTER SQUADRONS! HERE'S THE FORM...



WHY DOESN'T THE OLD MAN POST DANVERS?

I DON'T KNOW - IT'S ABOUT TIME WE HAD A REAL BASH AT JERRY!

... SIGNALS WILL GIVE YOU THE APPROPRIATE JERRY R.T. FREQUENCIES AND CALL SIGNS! YOU MAKE YOUR OWN WAY OVER INDIVIDUALLY! TRY TO COME IN BEHIND JERRY AS HE LANDS OR TAKE A CRACK AT HIM AS HE PULLS UP HIS UNDERCART ON THE WAY UP! BUT, FOR PETE'S SAKE, DON'T SHOOT EACH OTHER DOWN!



The Whispering Death

BOMBER CREWS RECEIVED THE NEWS OF THE ANTI-FIGHTER TECHNIQUE WITH RELIEF. . .

...ONE OTHER THING - THE BEAUFIGHTER BOYS HAVE THOUGHT UP A SCHEME TO DEAL WITH JERRY FIGHTERS. I THINK THE JERRIES ARE GOING TO HAVE THEIR WORK CUT OUT HUNTING FOR US TONIGHT!

GOOD SHOW!



BOB FELT A RISING EXCITEMENT AS TIME FOR TAKE-OFF CAME. BRIMFUL OF FIERY CONFIDENCE, HE SAW THE MISSION AS HIS CHANCE TO PROVE HIS THEORIES ONCE AND FOR ALL.

EVERYTHING OKAY, ANGUS? LET'S GET GOING!

ALL PRESENT AND CORRECT, LADDIE!



ACROSS THE CHANNEL, AWAITING THE R.A.F.'S NIGHTLY BOMBER ONSLAUGHT, WAS THE 91st. GERMAN NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON STATIONED NEAR APELDOORN, HOLLAND. . .



THE DEADLY SNUB-NOSED FOCKE-WULF 190'S CLAWED THEIR WAY OFF THE FLAREPATH - WITH A THUNDER OF POWERFUL ENGINES . . .

JACKAL CONTROL! THIS IS SWAN FOUR ZERO...AIRBORNE!



The Whispering Death



BOB WAS NOT THE ONLY ONE TO MAKE A KILL! WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE FOLLOWED A HOMING GERMAN NIGHT FIGHTER INTO ITS FLAREPATH FUNNEL-APPROACH...

THIS IS LIKE HITTING SITTING-BIRDS, NAVIGATOR! SEEMS TOO EASY, SOMEHOW!

LOOK OUT, SIR! BEHIND US!



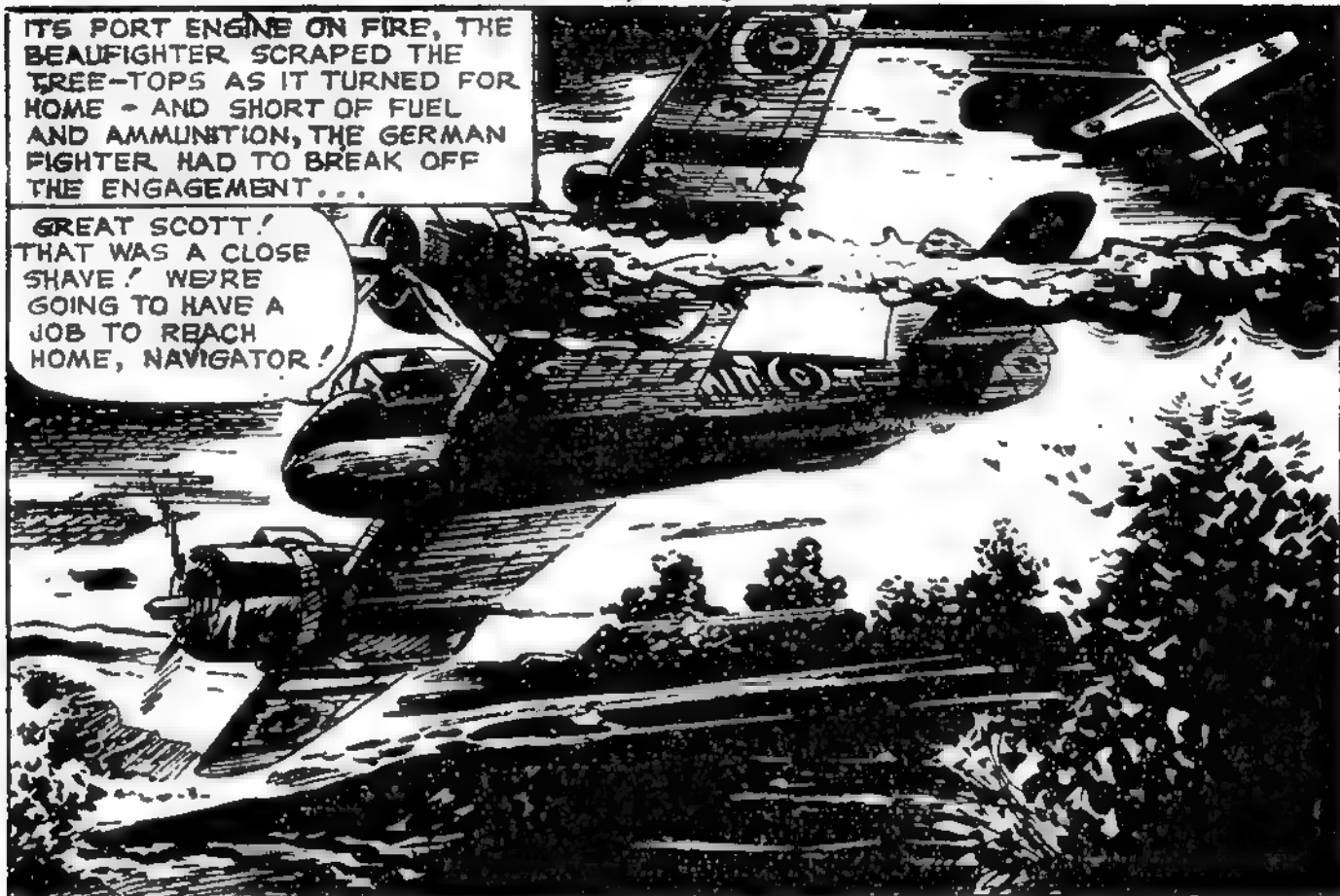
WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE HAD SPOKEN TOO SOON...

ENGLISH PIG! DIE!



ITS PORT ENGINE ON FIRE, THE BEAUFIGHTER SCRAPED THE TREE-TOPS AS IT TURNED FOR HOME - AND SHORT OF FUEL AND AMMUNITION, THE GERMAN FIGHTER HAD TO BREAK OFF THE ENGAGEMENT...

GREAT SCOTT! THAT WAS A CLOSE SHAVE! WE'RE GOING TO HAVE A JOB TO REACH HOME, NAVIGATOR!



BUT DESPITE THE LOSS OF ONE ENGINE, WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE - TOGETHER WITH THE REST OF THE SQUADRON - RETURNED SAFELY TO BASE. NO LOSSES - SIX KILLS! THE SQUADRON'S MORALE HAD NEVER BEEN HIGHER!

WELL, WING-COMMANDER, IF YOUR CREW'S REPORTS ARE ANYTHING TO JUDGE BY...THE OPERATION HAS BEEN AN OUTSTANDING SUCCESS!

HMM! THAT'S ALL VERY WELL, SIR, THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME AND JERRY WAS CAUGHT ON THE HOP! NEXT TIME'LL BE NO PICNIC!



AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL LOST PATIENCE WITH HIS SUBORDINATE . . .

NOW YOU JUST LISTEN TO ME, WING-COMMANDER ! YOU'RE A DASHED JEREMIAH, SIR ! NO 'GO', AT ALL ! IT'LL BE SOME TIME BEFORE JERRY FINDS COUNTER MEASURES - AND THEN WE'LL THINK OF SOMETHING ELSE ! NEXT TRIP, I INTEND TO FLY WITH THAT YOUNG FELLER, DANVERS - I WANT TO BE ABLE TO REPORT TO THE P.M. PERSONALLY ON THIS TECHNIQUE !



INWARDLY SEETHING WITH RAGE, FAIRBORNE STUMPED OFF TO INSPECT THE DAMAGE TO HIS AIRCRAFT . . .

WHEN THIS INTERFERING BRASS-HAT GOES, DANVERS IS GOING TO WISH HE'D NEVER BEEN BORN ! A JEREMIAH, AM I ? WE'LL SEE ON THE NEXT TRIP !



BOB AND ANGUS PASSED NEAR TO FAIRBORNE ON THE WAY TO THEIR QUARTERS...AND BOB COULD NOT RESIST A DIG AT HIS C.O.

I SAY ! NASTY MESS THEY MADE OF THAT PORT ENGINE, SIR !

YES, MISTER PERISHING DANVERS ! VERY NASTY ! I SUPPOSE YOU'LL BE SATISFIED WHEN THE WHOLE SQUADRON'S BEEN MUTILATED BY THE HUNS !



The Whispering Death

THE NEXT AFTERNOON, BOB HEARD OF AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL'S PLANS...

DANVERS - I'M VERY ANXIOUS TO SEE FOR MYSELF WHAT THE FORM IS ON THIS KIND OF OPERATION! YOU MAY TELL YOUR NAVIGATOR THAT HE MAY STAND DOWN TONIGHT - I SHALL TAKE HIS PLACE!

YESSIR!

LET'S HOPE THE BLIGHTER CAN NAVIGATE

I KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, DANVERS, BUT DON'T WORRY, I HAVEN'T FORGOTTEN ALL I LEARNED.

WHEN THE NEWS THAT BOB WAS TO FLY WITH SNELL SWEEPED THROUGH THE CAMP, IT WAS RECEIVED WITH MIXED FEELINGS.

HERE'S AIR VICE-MARSHAL DEATH-OR-GLORY DANVERS! MAKE WAY!

GOT ANY MORE 'IDEAS', DANVERS?

AW, STOW IT, YOU CHAPS! THAT LAST 'DO' WAS JUST THE JOB!

BOB HAD HAD ENOUGH! HE TURNED FURIOUSLY ON HIS MOCKERS...

ALL RIGHT, SO I'VE HAD SOME IDEAS! WE'RE IN A WAR, AREN'T WE? YOU ASK THE BOMBER BOYS - THEY'LL TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT. THEY DON'T WORRY IF THE PAINT GETS SCRATCHED ON THEIR KITES! SOME OF YOU MAKE ME SICK!



THAT AFTERNOON, AFTER BRIEFING, BOB AND ANGUS WENT OVER THE FLIGHT PLAN WITH SNELL. AIR VICE-MARSHAL OR NOT, BOB WAS DETERMINED TO MAKE SURE THAT HE KNEW HIS JOB...



THE MAIN THING, SIR, IS TO KEEP UP YOUR DEAD RECKONING EVEN WHEN WE'RE MAKING AN ATTACK! ROBERTSON HERE WILL PUT YOU WISE ON ANYTHING I HAVEN'T MADE CLEAR! ALL RIGHT, SIR?

ER...ER, YES... DANVERS!

The Whispering Death

THAT NIGHT, ANGUS WATCHED WITH MISGIVINGS AS HIS PILOT TOOK OFF. AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL'S ABILITY AS A NAVIGATOR HAD NOT IMPRESSED HIM...



THE BEAUFIGHTER, ONE OF MANY, SPED LOW OVER THE BLACK, UNFRIENDLY WATERS OF THE NORTH SEA. VISIBILITY WAS BAD...

HULLO, NAVIGATOR! HOPE THIS COURSE IS DEAD ON! IN THIS VISIBILITY WE'LL HAVE TO BE RIGHT ON THE BEAM!

...ER...YES, O-NINE-FIVE DEGREES!

CHECK! O-NINE-FIVE!



BUT FATE WAS NOT SMILING ON AIR VICE-MARSHAL SNELL. THE WIND HAD CHANGED DIRECTION AND STRENGTH...

WE SHOULD HAVE MADE A LANDFALL SIX MINUTES AGO!

HOLD-ON, I'LL CHECK AGAIN!



HE DID NOT EVEN HAVE TIME TO LOWER HIS EYES TO HIS MAP. THROUGH THE GROUND MIST LOOMED THE ROOFS AND SPIRES OF A LARGE TOWN...

YOU BLISTERING IDIOT! WE'VE STUCK OUR NECKS RIGHT OUT!

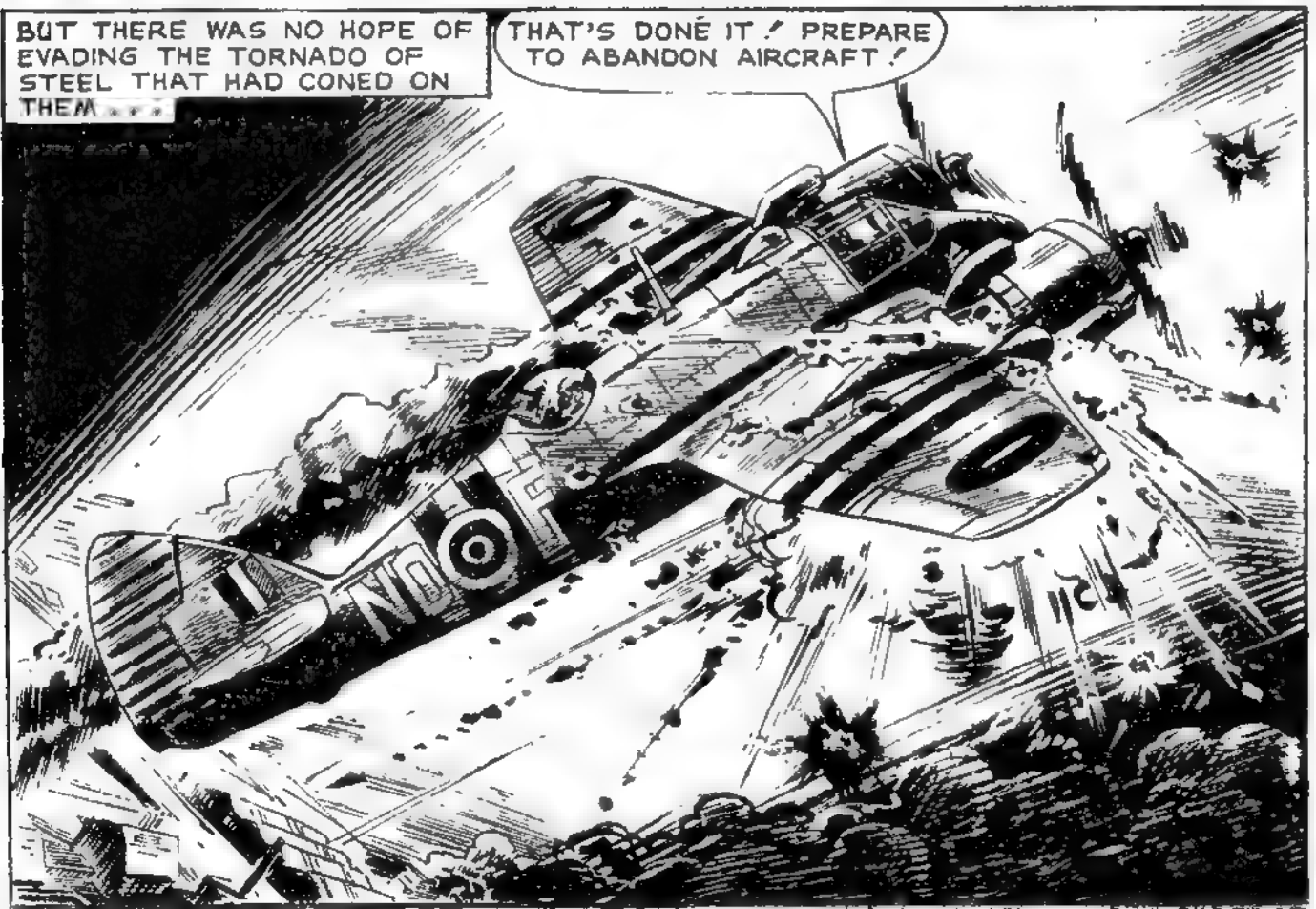


IT WAS THE HAGUE, 'HOLLAND. THE FLAK BATTERIES OPENED UP INSTANTLY AND THE SKY BECAME ALIVE WITH DEADLY, GLITTERING TRACER. BOB FLUNG THE BEAUFIGHTER THROUGH EVERY MANOEUVRE IN THE BOOK - AND A FEW MORE BESIDES.



BUT THERE WAS NO HOPE OF EVADING THE TORNADO OF STEEL THAT HAD CONED ON THEM ***

THAT'S DONE IT! PREPARE TO ABANDON AIRCRAFT!



TWO HOURS LATER, WING-COMMANDER FAIRBORNE WATCHED HIS SQUADRON RETURN TO BASE. ONE OF THE AIRCRAFT WAS MISSING ...

PERHAPS THEY'VE HAD SOME ENGINE TROUBLE, SIR.

...BUT THEY CAN'T BE MISSING! AIR MINISTRY WILL CHOP ME IN LITTLE PIECES IF AN AIR VICE-MARSHAL IS MISSING!



BUT THE NEXT DAY, THE LOSS WAS CONFIRMED. FAIRBORNE TOOK ANGUS ON AS HIS NAVIGATOR AND EVEN THE WING-COMMANDER FOUND IT DIFFICULT TO FORGET DEATH-OR-GLORY DANVERS. SOMETHING OF BOB'S SPIRIT WAS PRODDING THE SQUADRON INTO AGGRESSIVE MISSIONS THAT ONCE IT WOULD HAVE FLOWN A LONG WAY TO AVOID.



DID YOU SEE THE LOOK ON THAT ENGINE DRIVER'S FACE AS WE FLEW STRAIGHT AT HIM, SIR? BY THE WAY, HAVE YOU HAD ANY NEWS OF BOB YET?

NO, LADDIE, I HAVEN'T... BUT ONE THING I'M WILLING TO BET IS THAT DANVERS IS VERY MUCH ALIVE! I PITY THE JERRIES WITH HIM AROUND...AND POOR OLD SNELL!



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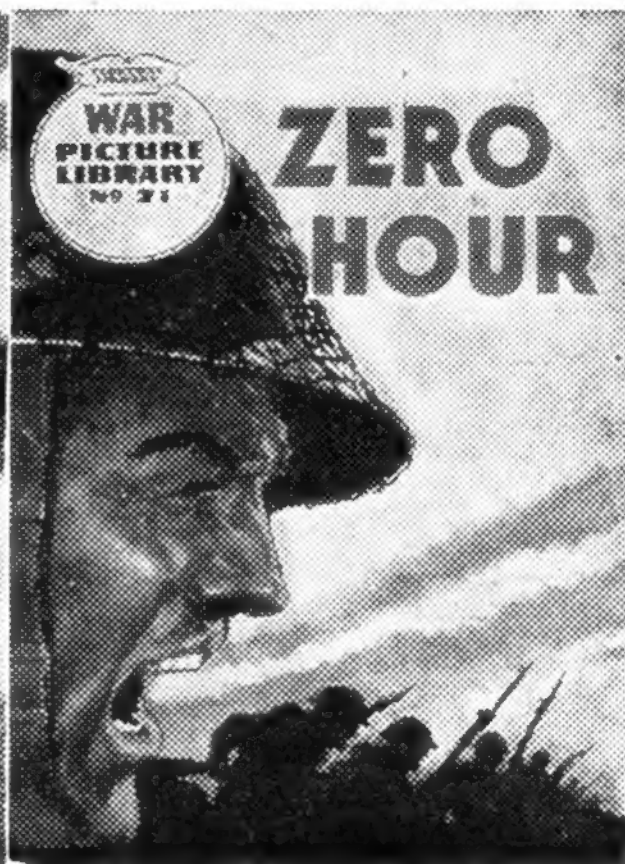
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